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DISSERTATIONS

AND

DISCUSSIONS

POLITICAL, PHILOSOPHICAL, AND HISTORICAL

REPRINTED

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BY

JOHN STUART MILL.

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IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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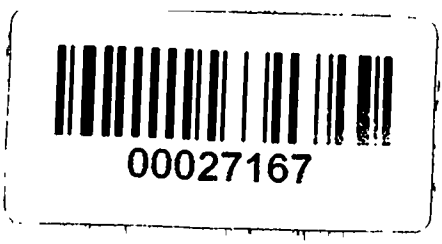

PREFACE.

THE republication in a more durable form, of papers originally contributed to periodicals, has grown into so common a practice as scarcely to need an apology; and I follow this practice the more willingly, as I hold it to be decidedly a beneficial one. It would be well if all frequent writers in periodicals looked forward, as far as the case admitted, to this reappearance of their productions. The prospect might be some guarantee against the crudity in the formation of opinions, and carelessness in their expression, which are the besetting sins of writings put forth under the screen of anonymousness, to be read only during the next few weeks or months, if so long, and the defects of which it is seldom probable that any one will think it worth while to expose.

The following papers, selected from a much greater number, include all of the writer's miscellaneous productions which he considers it in any way desirable to preserve. The remainder were either of too little value at any time, or what value they might have was too exclusively temporary, or the thoughts they contained were inextricably mixed up with

comments, now totally uninteresting, on passing events, or on some book not generally known; or lastly, any utility they may have possessed has since been superseded by other and more mature writings of the author.

Every one whose mind is progressive, or even whose opinions keep up with the changing facts that surround him, must necessarily, in looking back to his own writings during a series of years, find many things which, if they were to be written again, he would write differently, and some, even, which he has altogether ceased to think true. From these last I have endeavoured to clear the present pages. Beyond this, I have not attempted to render papers written at so many different, and some of them at such distant, times, a faithful representation of my present state of opinion and feeling. I leave them in all their imperfection, as memorials of the states of mind in which they were written, in the hope that they may possibly be useful to such readers as are in a corresponding stage of their own mental progress. Where what I had written appears a fair statement of part of the truth, but defective inasmuch as there exists another part respecting which nothing, or too little, is said, I leave the deficiency to be supplied by the reader's own thoughts; the rather, as he will, in many cases, find the balance restored in some other part of this collection. Thus, the review of Mr.

Sedgwick's Discourse, taken by itself, might give an impression of more complete adhesion to the philosophy of Locke, Bentham, and the eighteenth century, than is really the case, and of an inadequate sense of its deficiencies; but that notion will be rectified by the subsequent essays on Bentham and on Coleridge. These, again, if they stood alone, would give just as much too strong an impression of the writer's sympathy with the reaction of the nineteenth century against the eighteenth: but this exaggeration will be corrected by the more recent defence of the 'greatest happiness' ethics against Dr. Whewell.

Only a small number of these papers are controversial, and in but two am I aware of anything like asperity of tone. In both these cases some degree of it was justifiable, as I was defending maligned doctrines or individuals, against unmerited onslaughts by persons who, on the evidence afforded by themselves, were in no respect entitled to sit in judgment on them: and the same misrepresentations have been and still are so incessantly reiterated by a crowd of writers, that emphatic protests against them are as needful now as when the papers in question were first written. My adversaries, too, were men not themselves remarkable for mild treatment of opponents, and quite capable of holding their own in any form of reviewing or pamphleteer-

ing polemics. I believe that I have in no case fought with other than fair weapons, and any strong expressions which I have used were extorted from me by my subject, not prompted by the smallest feeling of personal ill-will towards my antagonists. In the revision, I have endeavoured to retain only as much of this strength of expression, as could not be foregone without weakening the force of the protest.

CONTENTS OF VOL. I.

	PAGE
THE RIGHT AND WRONG OF STATE INTERFERENCE WITH CORPORATION AND CHURCH PROPERTY	1
THE CURRENCY JUGGLE	42
A FEW OBSERVATIONS ON THE FRENCH REVOLUTION	56
THOUGHTS ON POETRY AND ITS VARIETIES	63
PROFESSOR SEDGWICK'S DISCOURSE ON THE STUDIES OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE	95
CIVILIZATION	160
APHORISMS: A FRAGMENT	206
ARMAND CARREL	211
A PROPHECY	284
WRITINGS OF ALFRED DE VIGNY	287
BENTHAM	330
COLERIDGE	393
APPENDIX	467

pressing of the duties which Parliamentary Reform has devolved upon our public men, is that of deciding what honestly *may*, and, supposing this determined, what *should*, be done with the property of the Church, and of the various Public Corporations.

It is a twofold problem; a question of expediency, and a question of morality: the former complex, and depending upon temporary circumstances; the latter simple, and unchangeable. We are to examine, not merely in what way a certain portion of property may be most usefully employed; that is a subsequent consideration: but, whether it can be touched at all without spoliation; whether the diversion of the estates of foundations from the present hands, and from the present purposes, would be disposing of what is justly our own, or robbing somebody else of what is his; violating property, endangering all rights, and infringing the first principles of the social union. For the enemies of the interference of the Legislature assert no less. And, if this were so, it would already be an act of immorality even to discuss the other question. It is not a fit occupation for an honest man, to cast up the probable profits of an act of plunder. If a resumption of endowments belongs to a class of acts which, by universal agreement, ought to be abstained from, whatever may be their consequences; there is no more to be said. Whether it does so or not, is the question now to be considered.

If the inquiry were embarrassed with no other difficulties than are inherent in its own nature, it would not, we think, detain us long. Unfortunately it is inextricably entangled with the hopes and fears,

the attachments and antipathies, of temporary politics. All men are either friendly or hostile to the Church of England; all men wish either well or ill to our universities, and to our municipal corporations. But we know not why the being biassed by such predilections or aversions, should be more pardonable in a moralist or a legislator, than it would be in a judge. If the dispute were, whether the Duke of Wellington should be called upon to account for 100,000*l.*, it would be a perversion of justice to moot the question of the Duke of Wellington's public services, and to decide the cause according as the judge approves, or not, of the war with Bonaparte, or Catholic emancipation. The true question would be, whether the money in the Duke's possession was his or not. We have our opinion, like other people, on the merits or demerits of the clergy, and other holders of endowments. We shall endeavour to forget that we have any. General principles of justice are not to be shaped to suit the form and dimensions of some particular case in which the judge happens to take an interest.

By a foundation or endowment, is to be understood, money or money's worth (most commonly land) assigned, in perpetuity or for some long period, for a public purpose: meaning by public, a purpose which, whatever it may be, is not the personal use and enjoyment of an assignable individual or individuals.

The foundations which exist or have existed, in this or other countries, are exceedingly multifarious. There are schools, and hospitals, supported by assignments of land or money; there are also almshouses,

and other charitable institutions of a nature more or less analogous. The estates of monasteries belong to the class of endowments: so do those of our universities; and the lands and tithes of all established churches. The estates of the Corporation of London, of the Fishmongers' and Mercers' Companies, &c., are also public foundations, and differ from the foregoing only in being local, not national. All these masses of property originally belonged to some individual or individuals, or to the State; and were, either by the rightful owner, or by some wrongful possessor, appropriated to the several purposes to which they now, really or in name, continue to be applied.

It may seem most natural to begin by considering, whether the existence of endowments is desirable at all; if this be settled in the affirmative, to inquire on what conditions they should be allowed to be constituted; and, lastly, how the Legislature ought to deal with them after they are formed. But the problem, what is to be done with existing endowments, is paramount in present importance to the question of prospective legislation. It is preferable, therefore, even at the expense of an inversion of the logical order of our propositions, to consider, first, whether it is allowable for the State to change the appropriation of endowments, and, afterwards, what is the limit at which its interference should stop.

If endowments are permitted, it is implied as a necessary condition, that the State, for a time at least, shall not intermeddle with them. The property assigned must temporarily be sacred to the purposes

to which it was destined by its owners. The founders of the London University would not have subscribed their money, nor would Mr. Drummond have established the Oxford Professorship of Political Economy, if they had thought that they were merely raising a sum of money to be placed at the disposal of Parliament, or of the Ministry for the time being. Subject to the restrictions which we shall hereafter suggest, the control of the founder, over the disposition of the property, should, in point of degree, be absolute. But to what extent should it reach in point of time? For how long should this unlimited power of the founder continue?

To this question the answer is in principle so obvious, that it is not easy to conceive how it can ever have been missed by any unsophisticated and earnest inquirer. The sacredness of the founder's assignment should continue during his own life, and for such longer period as the foresight of a prudent man may be presumed to reach, and no further. We do not pretend to fix the exact term of years; perhaps there is no necessity for its being accurately fixed; but it evidently should be but a moderate one. For such a period, it conduces to the ends for which foundations ought to exist, and for which alone they can ever rationally have been intended, that they should remain undisturbed.

All beyond this is to make the dead, judges of the exigencies of the living; to erect, not merely the ends, but the means, not merely the speculative opinions, but the practical expedients, of a gone-by age, into an irrevocable law for the present. The

wisdom of our ancestors was mostly a poor wisdom enough, but this is not even following the wisdom of our ancestors; for our ancestors did not bind themselves never to alter what they had once established. Under the guise of fulfilling a bequest, this is making a dead man's intentions for a single day, a rule for subsequent centuries, when we know not whether he himself would have made it a rule, even for the morrow.

There is no fact in history which posterity will find it more difficult to understand, than that the idea of perpetuity, and that of any of the contrivances of man, should have been coupled together in any sane mind: that it has been believed, nay, clung to as sacred truth, and has formed part of the creed of whole nations, that a signification of the will of a man, ages ago, could impose upon all mankind now and for ever an obligation of obeying him:—that, in the beginning of the nineteenth century, it was not permitted to question this doctrine without opprobrium: though for hundreds of years before, a solemn condemnation of this very absurdity had been incorporated in the laws, and familiar to every judge by whom, during all that period, they had been administered.

During the last four hundred years or thereabouts, in England and Wales, the power of a landed proprietor to entail his land in favour of a particular line of his descendants has been narrowed to a very moderate term of years after his decease. During a similar length of time, it has been laid down as a maxim of the common law, in the sweeping terms in which technical jurisprudence delights, that 'the law abhors perpetuities.' It is now a considerable number of

years since a London merchant* having by testament directed that the bulk of his fortune should accumulate for two generations, and then devolve without restriction upon a person specified; this will, rare as such dispositions might be expected to be, excited so much disapprobation, that an Act of Parliament was passed, expressly to enact that nothing of the same sort should be done in future.

Is it of consequence to the public by whom and how private property is inherited, which, whoever possess it, will in the main be spent in ministering to one person's individual wants and enjoyments—and is the use made of a like sum, specifically set apart for the benefit of the public, or of an indefinite portion of the public, a matter in which the nation has no concern? Or shall we say it is supposed by King, Lords, and Commons, and the Judges of the land, that a man cannot know what partition of his property among his descendants, thirty years hence, will be for the interest of the descendants themselves; but that he may know (though he have scarcely learnt the alphabet) how children may be best educated five hundred years hence; how the necessities of the poor may then be best provided for; what branches of learning, or of what is called learning, it will be most important to cultivate, and by what body of men it will be desirable that the people should be taught religion, to the end of time?

Men would not yield up their understandings to doctrines like these, if they were not under some strong bias. Such thoughts never sprung from reason and

* Mr. Thelusson, ancestor of the present Lord Rendlesham.

reflection. The cry about robbing the Church, spoliation of endowments, &c., means only that the speaker likes better the purposes to which the monies are now applied, than those to which he thinks they would be applied if they were resumed:—a feeling which, when founded on conviction, is entitled to respect; but were it even just, we do not see why a person, who has got at his conclusions by good arguments, should defend them by bad. It may be very unwise to alienate the property of some particular foundation; but that does not make it robbery. If it be inexpedient, prove it so; but do not pretend that it is a crime to disobey a man's injunctions who has been dead five hundred years. We fear, too, that this zeal for the inviolability of endowments proceeds often from a feeling, which we find it more difficult to bear with—that unreasoning instinct, which renders those whose souls are buried in their acres, or pent up in their money bags, partizans of the *uti possidetis* principle in all things; the dread that if anything is taken from anybody, everything will be taken from everybody; a terror, the more passionate because it is vague, at seeing violent hands laid upon their Dagon *money*, though it be but to rescue him from the hands of those who have filched him away.

That this is the real source of much of the horror which is felt at a bare proposal that the Legislature should lay a finger upon the estates of a public trust, although it be to restore them to their original purposes, is manifest from this; that the same persons can witness the most absolute perversion and alienation of the endowment from its destined ends, by the slow, silent creeping-in of abuse in the hands of the trustees

themselves, and not feel the slightest discomposure. Wherefore?—their solicitude was not for the objects of the endowment, but for the safety and sacredness of 'vested rights.' They dislike the example of searching in a person's pocket, although it be for stolen goods. For them, it is enough if the nine points of the law maintain their wonted sanctity. Those they are sure they have on their side, if any troublesome questioner should, in their turn, incommode *them*. The tenth point is much more intricate and obscure, and they have not half so much faith in it.

To every argument tending to prove the *utility* of the Church Establishment, or any other endowed public institution, unprejudiced attention is due. Like all reasons which are brought to show the inexpediency of a proposed innovation, they cannot be too carefully weighed. But when it is called spoliation of property, for the State to alter a disposition made by the State itself, or by an individual who died six hundred years ago, we answer, that no person ought to be exercising rights of property six hundred years after his death; that such rights of property, if they have been unwisely sanctioned by the State, ought to be instantaneously put an end to; that there is no fear of robbing a dead man; and no reasonable man who gave his money when living, for the benefit of the community, would have desired that his mode of benefiting the community should be adhered to when a better could be found.

Thus far of the imaginary rights of the founder. Next, as to those rights of another kind, which, in the case of an existing endowment, have usually sprung up in consequence of its existence; the life

interests of the actual holders. How far are these analogous to what are deemed rights of property?—that is, rights which it is unjust to take from the possessor without his consent, or without giving him a full equivalent.

There are some endowments in which the life interests amount to rights of property in the strictest sense. These are such as are created for the application of their revenues to the mere use and enjoyment of individuals of a particular description: to give pensions to indigent persons, or to persons devoted to particular pursuits; to relieve the necessities, or reward the services, of persons of a particular kind, by supporting them in almshouses or hospitals.

There are probably but a small proportion of these endowments which are fit for indefinite continuance: mankind have begun to find out that the mass of poverty is increased, not diminished, by these impotent attempts to keep pace with it by mere giving. All, however, who are actually benefiting by such institutions, have a right to the continuance of the benefit, which should be as inviolable as the right of the weaver to the produce of his loom. They have it by gift; as much so as if the founder were alive, and had settled it upon them by deed under hand and seal. To take it from an existing incumbent would be an *ex-post-facto* law of the worst kind. It would be the same sort of injustice as if, in abolishing entails, the *existing* landed proprietors were to be ejected from their estates, on the plea that the estates had *come* to them by entail from their predecessors.

These rights, however, are never anything but life interests. Such pensions or alms are not hereditary.

They are not transmissible by will, or by gift. There is no assignable person standing in remainder or reversion; no individual specially designated, either by law or custom, to succeed to a vacancy as it arises. No person would suffer any privation, or be disappointed in any authorized expectation, by the resumption of the endowment at the death of the existing incumbents. There is no loss, where nobody will ever know who has lost. To say that the funds cannot rightfully be resumed at the expiration of the life interests, because somebody or other would succeed to them if they continued to exist, is tantamount to affirming, that the army or navy can never be reduced without an act of spoliation, because, if they were kept up, somebody, to be sure, would be made a cadet or a midshipman, who otherwise will not.*

But there is another and a far more important class of endowments, where the object is not a provision for individuals of whatsoever description, but the furtherance of some public purpose; as the cultivation of learning, the diffusion of religious instruction, or the education of youth. Such, for instance, is the nature of the Church property, and the property attached to the Universities and the foundation schools. The individuals through whose hands the money passes, never entered into the founder's contemplation other-

* Charities or liberalities of this kind are not always unconditional; they may be burthened with the performance of some duty. Still, if the duty be merely an incidental charge, and the main purpose of the endowment be a provision for the individuals, the Legislature, though it may release the incumbents from the performance of the duty, is not at liberty, on that pretext, to make them forfeit the right. This they ought to retain for their lives, or for the term of years for which it was conferred; provided they hold themselves in readiness to fulfil its conditions, so far as they lawfully may.

wise than as mere trustees for the public purpose. The founder of a College at Oxford did not bestow his property in order that some men then living, and an indefinite series of successors appointing one another in a direct line, might be comfortably fed and clothed. He, we may presume, intended no benefit to them, further than as a necessary means to the end he had in view—the education of youth, and the advancement of learning. The like is true of the Church property: it is held in trust, for the spiritual culture of the people of England. The Clergy and the Universities are not proprietors, nor even partly trustees and partly proprietors: they are called so, we know, in law, and for legal purposes may be so called without impropriety; but moral right does not necessarily wait upon the convenience of technical classification. The trustees are indeed, at present, owing to the supineness of the Legislature, the sole tribunal empowered to judge of the performance of the trust: but it will scarcely be pretended that the money is made over to them for any other reason than because they are charged with the trust,—or that it is not an implied condition, that they shall apply every shilling of it with an exclusive regard to the performance of the duty entrusted to the collective body.

Yet of persons thus situated, persons whose interest in the foundation is entirely subsidiary and subordinate, the whole of whose rights exist solely as the necessary means to enable them to perform certain duties—it is currently asserted, and in the tone in which men affirm a self-evident moral truth, that the endowments of the Church and of the Universities are *their* property; to deprive them of which would be as

much an act of confiscation as to rob a landowner of his estate.

Their property! In what system of legislative ethics, or even of positive law,* is an estate in the hands of trustees the property of the trustees? It is the property of the *cestui que trust:* of the person, or body of persons, for whose benefit the trust is created. This, in the case of a national endowment, is the entire people.†

The claims of the Clergy, and of the various members of the Universities, to the retention of their present incomes, are of a widely different nature from those rights which are intended when we speak of the inviolability of property; and stand upon a totally different foundation. The same person who is a trustee, is also a labourer. He is to be paid for his services. What he is entitled to, is his wages while those services are required, and such retiring allowance as is stipulated in his engagement. All his just pretensions depend on the terms of his contract. He

* If any caviller should say that the English common law is an exception, inasmuch as trusts are not recognised or enforced by the common law courts, the legal estate vesting in the trustee; we answer that we cannot consider anything as law which does not actually obtain as such, but is superseded by the contrary mandates of the rival power Equity.

† In the case of endowments which, though existing for public purposes, are not national but local, such as the estates of the City of London, the *cestui que trust* is not the entire people, but some limited portion of them, namely, those who are directly reached by the benefit intended to be conferred. To apply such property to *national* purposes, without the consent, duly signified, of the fractional part of the nation which is interested in it, might be wrong. But that fractional portion is generally far larger than the body which the law now recognises as the proprietor. We hold, for example, that if the Legislature (as it ought) should unite the whole of the metropolis into one body for municipal purposes, the estates of the City of London, and probably those of the incorporated trades, might be applied to the benefit of that collective body without injustice.

would have no ground of complaint, unless on the score of inhumanity, if, when his services are no longer needed, he were dismissed without a provision; unless the contract by which he was engaged had expressly or tacitly provided otherwise.

It is, however, the fact, that in the majority of cases, and particularly in the case of the Church and of the Universities, the incumbents hold their emoluments under an implied contract, which fully entitles them to retain the whole amount during the term of their lives.

If the army were to be remodelled, or to be reduced, and the whole of the officers changed, or a part of them discarded; and if these were thrown upon the world, without allowing them half-pay, or the pension of their rank, there would not (it will probably be allowed) be any spoliation of property. But it might be said, with justice, that there would be a breach of an implied contract; because the State would be defeating an expectation raised by its own uniform practice. Half-pay, or a pension, is certainly not *promised* to an officer when he enters the army; he does not give his services on that express *condition*. But the regulations of the army have from time immemorial sanctioned the practice, and led the officers to count upon it, and they give their services on that *understanding*.

The case of the clergyman only differs from that of the military officer in this, that the one, by custom, may be deprived of his place, but retains a part of its emoluments; the other, by a different custom, retains his place, emoluments and all, for the remainder of his life. If this were the practice in the army, then,

instead of half-pay, an officer would never retire on less than full; and all persons would see that, whether this was a good practice or not, it ought not to be abolished retrospectively. The same argument holds good in the case of the clergyman.

It cannot be doubted that where the emoluments of a public officer have, by the uniform practice of ages, been considered as placed out of the control of the Legislature, to exercise that control to the disadvantage of the individual, without giving him notice before he accepts the office, is an injustice to him. It gives him reasonable ground for complaining of a breach of contract, and should be scrupulously avoided; even if it were not something more than merely impolitic, to immolate large classes of persons for the pecuniary gain of the remainder; and most unwise to teach a multitude of influential persons that their only means of maintaining themselves and their families in their accustomed comfort is by a successful resistance to political reforms.

In return for the continuation of the life interests after releasing the incumbents from the performance of the accompanying duties, the State, of course, would acquire a right to the services of the individuals in any other mode in which it could turn them to use; provided it were one suited to the station they had formerly filled.

We have endeavoured to make as clear as possible the real grounds of the moral question respecting the interference of the Legislature with foundations. We have affirmed that it is no violation of any right which ought to exist in the founder, to set aside his

dispositions many years after his decease; but that where individuals have been allowed to acquire beneficial interests in the endowment, these ought in general to be respected; being, in most cases, either rights of property for life, or rights for life by virtue of an implied contract. But with the reservation of these life interests, the Legislature is at liberty to dispose, at its discretion, of the endowment, after that moderate number of years has elapsed from the date of its formation, beyond which the foresight of an individual cannot reasonably be supposed to extend.

We feel certain that the conclusion which we have just stated is fully made out, and that nothing in the nature of an argument capable of bearing examination, can be brought to invalidate it. But it is harder, in some cases, to convince men's imagination than their reason; and scarcely anything which can be said is enough to destroy the force of an objection, which is yet a mere illusion of the imagination, by the aid of a collective name.

Would you rob the Church? it is asked. And at the sound of these words rise up images of rapine, violence, plunder; and every sentiment of repugnance which would be excited by a proposal to take away from an individual the earnings of his toil or the inheritance of his fathers, comes heightened in the particular case by the added idea of sacrilege.

But the Church! Who is the Church? Who is it that we desire to rob? Who are the persons whose property, whose rights we are proposing to take away?

Not the clergy; from them we do not propose to take anything. To every man who now benefits by

the endowment, we have said that we would leave his entire income; at least until the State shall offer, as the purchase money of his services in some other shape, advantages which he himself shall regard as equivalent.

But if not the clergy, surely we are not proposing to rob the laity: on the contrary, they are robbed now, if the fact be, that the application of the money to its present purpose is no longer advisable. We are exhorting the laity to *claim* their property out of the hands of the clergy; who are not the Church, but only the managing members of the association.

Qui trompe-t-on ici? asks Figaro. *Qui vole-t-on ici?* may well be asked. What man, woman, or child, is the victim of this robbery? Who suffers by the robbery when everybody robs nobody? But though no man, woman, or child is robbed, the Church it seems is robbed. What follows? That the Church may be robbed, and no man, woman, or child be the worse for it. If this be so, why, in Heaven's name, should it not be done? If money or money's worth can be squeezed out of an abstraction, we would appropriate it without scruple. We had no idea that the region

> Where entity and quiddity,
> The ghosts of defunct bodies, fly,

was an Eldorado of riches. We wish all other abstract ideas had as ample a patrimony. It is fortunate that their estates are of a less volatile and airy nature than themselves, and that here at length is a 'chimæra bombinans in vacuo,' which lives upon something more substantial than 'secundas intentiones.' We hold all such *entia rationis* to be fair game, and their

possessions a legitimate subject of invasion and conquest.

Any act may be a crime, if giving it a bad name could make it so; but the robbery that we object to must be something more than robbing a word. The laws of property were made for the protection of human beings, and not of phrases. As long as the bread is not taken from any of our fellow-creatures, we care not though the whole English dictionary had to beg in the streets. Let those who think it a robbery for the nation to resume what we say is its own, tell us whose it is; let them inform us, what human creatures it belongs to; not what letters and syllables. The alphabet has no property, and if it bring an action for damages in any court where we are judge, it shall be nonsuited.

But the Church, it will be said, is a corporation (or in strictness of legal language, an aggregate of many corporations); and a corporation is a *person*, and may hold property, and bring an action at law. A corporation never dies, but is like a river, ever flowing, yet always the same; while it empties at one extremity it fills at the other, and preserves its identity by the continuity of its existence. Whatever is acquired for the corporation belongs to the corporation, even when all its members have died out, and been succeeded by others. So London stands upon the Thames as it did at the Conquest, though not one drop of water be the same.

It is quite unnecessary to remind us of all this. It is true that such is the law. We admit that the law can call a man now living, and a man not yet born, the same person; but that does not hinder them from

being different men. Having declared them one person, it may ordain that the income held by one in a certain capacity, shall pass, on his death, to the other. There is nothing at all inconceivable in the idea; so far from it, that such is actually the fact. It is as simple and as easy as to say that a man's income shall pass to the man's own son. It is one of the modes in which property may be legally transmitted. It is part of the law of inheritance and succession.

There is not the slightest intention entertained of disputing all this. The law is precisely as it is said to be: but because the law is so, does it follow that it ought to be? or that it must remain protected against amendment, more than any other of the laws which regulate the succession to property?

All, or almost all, laws give rights to somebody. By the abrogation of any, or almost any laws, some rights would be prevented from existing. But because a law has once been enacted, ought it to subsist for ever? We know that there are some alterations in the law, which would be, morally speaking, infringements of property. What makes them so? Not, surely, the mere fact, inseparable from the repeal of any law whatever, that the class of rights which it created ceases to exist. Where then lies the distinction? There is no difficulty about it, nor ever was. The difference is, that some laws cannot be altered without painfully frustrating existing and authorized expectations; for which, therefore, compensation is in all or most cases due. Now in the case of church property no authorized expectations are defeated, unless those of existing incumbents: this evil is prevented if the life interests of the in-

cumbents are preserved to them.* To make the semblance of an injury where there is none, nothing better can be thought of than to lump together the living incumbents and their unborn successors into one undivided mass, call the entire heap one person, and pretend that not to give to the unborn man, is to take from the living one.

To resume endowments would incontestably be to set aside, by an act of the legislature, a disposition of property lawfully made. It would be a change in the laws; but a change which is allowable, if to alter a disposition of law be ever allowable. The fact of its being a disposition of property can make no difference. Property surely may be appropriated by law, to purposes from which it may be highly desirable that it should be alienated. Much property is set apart by the laws of all idolatrous nations, for the special use and service of their gods. Large revenues are annually expended in offerings to those gods. To resume those revenues would manifestly be robbing Baal; they are his by law: law cannot give a clearer right of property than he has to them. A lawyer, addressing a court of justice, would have nothing to object to this argument: but a moralist, or a legislator, might say, that the revenues were of no use to Baal, and that he would never miss them.

We, of this generation, are not addicted to falling down before a Baal of brass or stone: the idols we

* To make the proposition absolutely unassailable, instead of 'existing incumbents,' it should perhaps be said, persons actually in orders. All authorized expectations of unbeneficed expectants would be satisfied by postponing the resumption for a sufficient number of years to enable their expectation, if well grounded, to become possession.

worship are abstract terms: the divinities to whom we render up our substance are personifications. Besides our duties to our fellow-countrymen, we owe duties to the *constitution*; privileges which landlords or merchants have no claim to, must be granted to *agriculture*, or *trade:* and when every clergyman has received the last halfpenny of his dues and expectations, there remain rights of *the Church*, which it would be sacrilege to violate.

To all such rights we confess our indifference. The only moral duties which we are conscious of, are towards living beings, either present or to come; who can be in some way better for what we do or forbear. When we have done our duty to all these, we feel easy in our minds, and sleep with an untroubled conscience the sleep of the just; a sleep which the groans of no plundered abstraction are loud enough to disturb.

If the case were not already far more than sufficiently made out, it would be pertinent to observe that the Church of England, least of all religious establishments, is entitled to dispute the power of the legislature to alter the destination of endowments, since it owes to the exercise of such a power all its own possessions.

The Roman Catholic Church derived its property from an earlier source than any of the existing governments of Christendom: it is moreover a society within itself, which existed anterior to the State, which is organized independently of the State, and no changes in the State can affect its identity, or its constitution. Its endowments, too, or a great part of them, came into its hands not for public purposes but

for private; not in trust, but by fair bargain and sale; the donor taking out the value in masses for his private salvation; thereby, as he hoped, effecting an earlier liberation of his individual soul from purgatory. If any ecclesiastical establishment, therefore, could be entitled to deem itself ill-used in having its property taken away from it, this might. Not so the Church of England; she, from her origin, never was anything but a state church; all the property she ever had, the State first took from the Roman Catholic Church;* exercising therein a just and proper attribute of sovereignty; but perpetrating a flagrant wrong in paying little or no regard to life interests, and consigning the incumbents to penury. The corporation which was then turned out of house and home, still exists, and is in every respect the same as before: but if the Church of England were separated from the State, its identity as a corporation would be gone: the present religious society would be dissolved, and a new one formed, under different rules and a different principle of government;—from a monarchy it would be changed to a republic, from a system of nomination to one of election. 'A Catholic bishop can look out upon the fair and broad domains of his Protestant substitute, and say, all this would have been mine. But let the State endowments be once withdrawn from the Church

* We know it is contended that there was no transfer of property at the Reformation from one church to another, but that it was still the same church, which had merely changed a portion of its opinions: but were not many prelates expelled from their sees, and parochial clergy from their benefices? And was not this done by the Act of Parliament which imposed the oath of supremacy, and not by the canonical authority of any merely ecclesiastical tribunal?

of England, her mitred but unpalaced prelates will indulge in no such delusion: nobody, we suppose, will then stand up for the simoniacal abuses of lay-patronage and *congés d'élire;* and the divine who for his piety and learning shall have been elected rector of Stanhope, or bishop of Winchester, if he ever cast a wistful thought towards the pristine appendages of his dignity, will check it by the reflexion, that they would not have belonged to him, but to some political tool, some tutor or chaplain of a minister, or the stupidest son of some squirearchal house. A Catholic prelate, no doubt, believes at heart that he has been robbed; as the descendants of the Pretender would have believed to the latest generation, that they ought to be Kings of England. But an English Protestant bishop who (after his church in ceasing to receive state pay, had ceased also to be fashioned as a state tool) should still fancy that *he* was the person losing by the abolition of the salary, must be strangely ignorant of the history of England's political religion, as well as of something else which would have taught him that a person honestly selected to serve God, was not a likely individual to have been appointed high-priest of Mammon.

Considering it, then, as indisputable, that endowments, after a certain lapse of time, may, at the discretion of the legislature, be diverted from their original purposes; it remains to consider by what principles or rules the legislature is bound to govern itself in the exercise of this discretion.

We would prescribe but one rule: it is somewhat general, but sufficient to indicate the spirit in which

the control of the legislature ought to be exerted. When a resolution has been taken (which should never be, except on strong grounds) to alter the appropriation of an endowment; the first object should be to employ it usefully; the second, to depart as little from the original purpose of the foundation, as is consistent with that primary object. The endeavour should be, even in altering the disposition of the founder, to carry into effect as much of his intention as it is possible to realize without too great a sacrifice of substantial utility.

This limitation of the discretionary power of interference residing in the legislature, would meet, we suspect, with as much resistance (though from a very different sort of persons) as the discretionary power itself. It would be objected to by some, because they are desirous to confiscate the existing endowments towards paying off the national debt, or defraying the current expenses of the State: by others, because they deem foundations altogether to be rather mischievous than useful, and the intentions of founders to be undeserving of any regard. This last opinion is the more entitled to notice, as among its supporters is to be numbered the great and good Turgot. That eminently wise man thought so unfavourably of the purposes for which endowments are usually made, and of the average intelligence of the founders, that he was an enemy to foundations altogether.

Notwithstanding our deep reverence for this illustrious man, and the great weight which is due to his sentiments on all subjects which he had maturely considered, we must regard his opinion on this subject, as one of what it is now allowable to call the

prejudices of his age. The wisest person is not safe from the liability to mistake for good the reverse of some inveterate and grievous ill. The clearer his discernment of existing evils, and the more absolutely his whole soul is engaged in the contest against them, the more danger that the mischiefs which chiefly occupy his own thoughts, should render him insensible to their contraries, and that in guarding one side he should leave the other uncovered. If Turgot did not wholly escape this error, which was common to all the philosophers of his time, ample allowance may be justly claimed both for him and for them. It is not the least of the mischiefs of our mischievous prejudices, that in their decline they raise up counter-prejudices, and that the human mind must oscillate for a time between opposite extremes, before it can settle quietly in the middle. The prejudices of the French philosophers were such as it was natural should exist, when all established institutions were in the very last stage of decay and decrepitude, preparatory to the catastrophe by which, soon after, they were swept away:—when whatever was meant to transmit light, had become a curtain to keep it out, and whatever was designed for protection of society, had turned to preying upon society;—when every trust which had been reposed in individuals for the benefit of the species, had degenerated into a selfish job, and the canker had eaten so deeply into the heart of civilization, that the greatest genius of his time deliberately preferred the condition of a naked savage.

At the head of the foundations which existed in the time of Turgot was the Catholic hierarchy, then almost effete; which had become irrecon-

cilably hostile to the progress of the human mind, because that progress was no longer compatible with belief in its tenets; and which, to stand its ground against the advance of incredulity, had been driven to knit itself closely with the temporal despotism, to which it had once been a substantial, and the only existing, impediment and control. After this came monastic bodies, constituted ostensibly for purposes which derived their value chiefly from superstition, and now not even fulfilling what they professed; bodies, of most of which the very existence had become one vast and continued imposture. Next came universities and academical institutions, which had once taught all that was then known; but having ever since indulged their ease by remaining stationary, found it for their interest that knowledge should do so too—institutions for education, which kept a century behind the community they affected to educate; who, when Descartes appeared, publicly censured him for differing from Aristotle; and when Newton appeared, anathematized him for differing from Descartes. There were hospitals which killed more of their unhappy patients than they cured, and charities, of which the superintendants, like the licentiate in Gil Blas, got rich by taking care of the affairs of the poor: or which at best made twenty beggars, by giving, or pretending to give, a miserable and dependent pittance to one.

The foundations, therefore, were among the grossest and most conspicuous of the familiar abuses of the time; and beneath their shade flourished and multiplied large classes of men, by interest and habit the protectors of all abuses whatsoever. What wonder,

that a life spent in practical struggles against abuses should have strongly prepossessed Turgot against foundations in general. Yet the evils existed, not because there were foundations, but because those foundations were perpetuities, and because provision was not made for their continual modification, to meet the wants of each successive age.

The opinion of Turgot was sufficiently in accordance with the prevailing philosophy of his time. It is rare that the same heads and the same hands excel both in pulling down and in building up. The work of urgency in those days was to make war against evil: this the philosophers did, and the negation of evil was nearly all the good which their philosophy provided for. They seem to have conceived the perfection of political society to be reached, if man could but be compelled to abstain from injuring man; not considering that men need help as well as forbearance, and that Nature is to the greater number a severer taskmaster even than man is to man. They left each individual to fight his own battle against fate and necessity, with little aid from his fellow-men, save what he, of his own spontaneous seeking, might purchase in open market and pay for.

If this be a just estimate of the exigencies of human society; if man requires nothing from man, except to be guarded against molestation; undoubtedly foundations, and many other things, are great absurdities. But we may conceive a people, perfectly exempt from oppression by their government, amply protected by it, both against foreign enemies and against force or fraud as between its own citizens; we may conceive all this secured, as far at least as institutions can

secure it, and yet the people in an abject state of degradation, both physical and mental.

The primary and perennial sources of all social evil, are ignorance and want of culture. These are not reached by the best contrived system of political checks, necessary as such checks are for other purposes. There is also an unfortunate peculiarity attending these evils. Of all calamities, they are those of which the persons suffering from them are apt to be least aware. Of their bodily wants and ailments mankind are generally conscious; but the want of the mind, the want of being wiser and better, is in the far greater number of cases unfelt: some of its disastrous consequences are felt, but are ascribed to any imaginable cause except the true one. This want has also the property of disguising from mankind not only itself, but the most eligible means of providing even for the wants of which they are conscious.

On what, then, have mankind depended, on what must they continue to be dependent, for the removal of their ignorance and of their defect of culture? Mainly, on the unremitting exertions of the more instructed and cultivated, whether in the position of the government or in a private station, to awaken in their minds a consciousness of this want, and to facilitate to them the means of supplying it. The instruments of this work are not merely schools and colleges, but every means by which the people can be reached, either through their intellects or their sensibilities: from preaching and popular writing, to national galleries, theatres, and public games.

Here, then, is a wide field of usefulness open for foundations; and in point of fact, they have been

destined for such purposes oftener than for any other. We are of opinion that such endowments are deserving of encouragement, where a sufficiency do not already exist; and that their funds ought not to be appropriated in another manner, as long as any opening remains for their useful application in this.

A doctrine is indeed abroad, and has been sanctioned by many high authorities, among others by Adam Smith, that endowed establishments, for education or other public purposes, are a mere premium upon idleness and inefficiency. Undoubtedly they are so, when it is nobody's business to see that the receivers of the endowment do their duty; when (what is more) every attempt to regulate, or so much as to know (further than the interested parties choose to make it known) the manner in which the funds are employed, and the nature and extent of the service rendered in consideration of them, is resented and exclaimed against as an interference with the inviolability of private property. That this is the condition of most of our own endowed establishments is too true.* But instead of fixing our eyes exclusively upon what is nearest to us, let us turn them towards the endowed Universities of France and Germany, and mark if those are places of idleness and inefficiency. Let us see whether, where the endowment proceeds from the governments themselves, and where the governments do not, as here, leave it optional whether that which is promised and paid for shall or shall not be done, it be not found that, notwithstanding the acknowledged defects of those governments, the education given is the best

* Happily now no longer so [1859].

which the age and country can supply. Let us even look at home, and examine whether, with all the grievous abuses of the endowed seminaries of Great Britain, they are, after all, worse than, or even so bad as, almost all our other places of education ? We may ask, whether the desire to gain as much money with as little labour as is consistent with saving appearances, be peculiar to the endowed teachers? Whether the plan of nineteen-twentieths of our unendowed schools, be not an organized system of charlatanerie for imposing upon the ignorance of parents? Whether parents do, in point of fact, prove themselves as solicitous, and as well qualified, to judge rightly of the merits of places of education, as the theory of Adam Smith supposes? Whether the truth be not, that, for the most part, they bestow very little thought upon the matter; or if they do, show themselves in general the ready dupes of the very shallowest artifices? Whether the necessity of keeping parents in good humour does not too often, instead of rendering the education better, render it worse; the real ends of instruction being sacrificed, not solely (as would otherwise be the case) to the ease of the teacher, but to that, and also to the additional positive vices of clap-trap and lip-proficiency? We may ask whether it is not matter of experience, that a schoolmaster who endeavours really to educate, instead of endeavouring only to seem to educate, and laying himself out for the suffrages of those who never look below the surface, and only for an instant at that, is almost sure, unless he have the genius and the ardour of a Pestalozzi, to make a losing speculation? Let us do what we may, it will be the study of the merely trading schoolmaster to

teach down to the level of the parents, be that level high or low; as it is of the trading author, to write down to the level of his readers. And in the one shape as in the other, it is in all times and in all places indispensable, that enlightened individuals and enlightened governments should, from other motives than that of pecuniary gain, bestir themselves to provide (though by no means forcibly to impose) that good and wholesome food for the wants of the mind, for which the competition of the mere trading market affords in general so indifferent a substitute.

It may be said, however, that where there is a wise government, and one which has the confidence of the people, whatever expense it may be requisite either to defray or to advance for national education, or any other of the purposes for which endowments exist, ought rather to be furnished by the government, and paid out of the taxes; the government being probably a better judge of good education than an average man—even an average founder.

To this it may be answered, that the full benefit of the superior wisdom of the government would be obtained, in the case of old foundations, by that discretionary power of modifying the dispositions of the founder, which ought to be exerted by the government as often as the purposes of the foundation require. We certainly agree, that if the government is so wise, and if the people rely so implicitly on its wisdom, as to find money out of the taxes for all the purposes of utility to which they could have applied the endowment, it is of no consequence whether the endowment be alienated or not; the alienation is merely nominal. But all know how far the fact at

present differs from any such supposition. It is impossible to be assured that the people will be willing to be taxed for every purpose of moral and intellectual improvement for which funds may be required. But if there were a fund specially set apart, which had never come from the people's pockets at all, which was given to them in trust for the purpose of education, and which it was considered improper to divert to any other employment while it could be usefully devoted to that; the people would probably be always willing to have it applied to that purpose. There is such a fund, and it consists of the national endowments.

If, again, it be said, that as the people grow more enlightened, they will become more able to appreciate, and more willing to pay for, good instruction; that the competition of the market will become more and more adequate to provide good education, and endowed establishments will be less and less necessary; we admit the fact. And it might be said with equal truth, that as the people improve there will be less and less necessity for penal laws. But penal laws are one among the indispensable means of bringing about this very improvement; and in like manner, if the people ever become sufficiently enlightened to be able to do without educational endowments, it will be because those endowments will have been preserved, and prized, and made efficient for their proper purpose. It is only by a right use of endowments that a people can be raised above the need of them.

So much with regard to old endowments; the application of which, to the purpose for which they were destined, ought to be as completely under the control of the government as if the funds were taken

directly out of the taxes. But in addition to these old endowments, the liberty of forming new ones, for education and mental culture in all shapes, seems to us of considerable importance; and a limited number of years should, we think, be allowed, during which the disposition of the founder should undergo no alteration.

We deem this advisable, simply because governments are fallible; and, as they have ample means both of providing and of recommending the education they deem best, should not be allowed to prevent other people from doing the same. No government is entitled (further than is implied in the very act of governing) to make its own opinion the measure of everything which is useful and true. A perfect government would, no doubt, be always under the guidance of the wisest members of the community. But no government can unite all the wisdom which is in all the members of the community taken together; much less can a mere majority in a legislative body. A nation ought not to place its entire stake upon the wisdom of one man, or one body of men, and to deprive all other intellect and virtue of a fair field of usefulness, whenever they cannot be made to square exactly with the intellect and virtue of that man or body. It is the wisdom of a community, as well as of an individual, to beware of being one-sided: the more chances it gives itself, the greater the probability that some will succeed. A government, when properly constituted, should be allowed the greatest possible facilities for what itself deems good; but the smallest for preventing the good which may chance to come from elsewhere. This will not be disputed

if the government be a monarchy or an aristocracy: it is quite equally true when the constitution is popular. The disapprobation of the government, in that case, means the disapprobation of the majority: and where the opinion of the majority gives the law, there, above all, it is eminently the interest of the majority, that minorities should have fair play. Sinister interest indeed is often found in a minority, but so, it must also be remembered, is truth: at its original appearance it must be so. All improvements, either in opinion or practice, must be in a minority at first.

We deem it important that individuals should have it in their power to enable good schooling, good writing, good preaching, or any other course of good instruction, to be carried on for a certain number of years at a pecuniary loss. By that time, if the people are intelligent, and the government wisely constituted, the institution will probably be capable of supporting itself, or the government will be willing to adopt all that is good in it, for the improvement of the institutions which are under the public care. For, that the people can see what is for their good, when it has long been shown them, is commonly true; that they can foresee it—seldom.

Endowments, again, are a natural and convenient mode of providing for the support of establishments which are interesting only to a peculiar class, and for which, therefore, it might be improper to tax all the members of the community. Such, for instance, are colleges for the professional instruction of the clergy of a sect; as Maynooth, Manchester, or Highbury.

If, then, it be in truth desirable that foundations

should exist, which we think is clear from the foregoing and many other considerations; it would seem to follow, as a natural consequence, that the appropriation made by the founder should not be set aside, save in so far as paramount reasons of utility require; that his design should be no further departed from than he himself would probably have approved, if he had lived to the present time, and participated to a reasonable degree in its best ideas. If foundations deserve to be encouraged, it is desirable to reward the liberality of the founder, by allowing to works of usefulness (though not a perpetuity) as prolonged a duration of individual and distinguishable existence as circumstances will admit.

But this is not the only, nor perhaps the strongest reason, for keeping to a certain extent in view, even in an alienation of endowments, the intention of the founder. Almost any fixed rule, consistent with ensuring the employment of the funds for some purpose of real utility, is preferable to allowing financiers to count upon them as a resource applicable to all the exigencies of the State indiscriminately. Otherwise they may be seized on to supply, not the most permanent or essential, but the most immediate and importunate demands: one year of financial difficulty might suffice to dissipate funds that centuries would not replace; and the time for an interference with foundations would be determined, not by the necessity of a reform, but by the state of the quarter's revenue. Nor would it be right to disregard the great importance of the associations which lead mankind to respect the declared will of every person, in the disposal of what is justly his own. That will is

surely not least deserving of respect, when it is ordaining an act of beneficence. And any deviation from it, not called for by high considerations of social good, even when not a violation of property, runs counter to a feeling so nearly allied to those on which the respect for property is founded, that there is scarcely a possibility of infringing the one without shaking the security of the other.

It is no violation of these salutary associations to resume an endowment, if it be done with the conscientious reservation which we have suggested. Respect for the intentions of the founder is not shown by a literal adherence to his mere words, but by an honest attempt to give execution to his real wishes; not sticking superstitiously to the means which he hit upon accidentally, or because he knew no better; but regarding solely the end which he sought to compass by those means.

The first duty of the Legislature, indeed, is to employ the endowment *usefully:* and that in a *degree* corresponding to the greatness of the benefit contemplated by the donor. But it is also of importance, that not only as great a benefit, but as far as possible the same kind of benefit, should be reaped by society, as that which the founder intended. It is incumbent on the State to consider, not to what purpose it, under the temptations of the moment, would like best to apply the money; but rather what, among all objects of unquestionable utility, which a reasonable person in these days would value sufficiently to give this sum of money for, is the particular purpose most resembling the original disposition of the founder.

Thus, money assigned for purposes of education, should be devoted, by preference, to education: the kind, and the mode, being altered, as the principles and practice of education come to be better understood. Money left for giving alms, should certainly cease to be expended in giving alms; but it should be applied, in preference, to the general benefit of the poorer classes, in whatever manner might appear most eligible. The endowments of an established church should continue to bear that character, as long as it is deemed advisable that the clergy of a sect or sects should be supported by a public provision of that amount: and under any circumstances, as much of these endowments as is required should be sacredly preserved for the purposes of spiritual culture; using that expression in its primitive meaning, to denote the culture of the inward man—his moral and intellectual well-being, as distinguished from the mere supply of his bodily wants.

Such, indeed, as has been forcibly maintained by Mr. Coleridge, was the only just conception of a national clergy, from their first establishment. To the minds of our ancestors they presented themselves, not solely as ministers for going through the ceremonial of religion, nor even solely as religious teachers in the narrow sense, but as the *lettered* class; the *clerici* or clerks; who were appointed generally to prosecute all those studies, and diffuse all those impressions, which constituted mental culture, as then understood; which fitted the mind of man for his condition, destiny, and duty, as a human being. In proportion as this enlarged conception of the object of a national church establishment has been departed

from, so far, in the opinion of the first living defender of our own establishment, it has been perverted both in idea and in fact from its true nature and ends. A national *clerisy* or clergy, as Mr. Coleridge conceives it, would be a grand institution for the education of the whole people: not their school education merely, though that would be included in the scheme; but for training and rearing them, by systematic culture continued throughout life, to the highest perfection of their mental and spiritual nature.

The benefits of such an institution, and how it ought to be constituted to be free from the vices of an established church as at present understood, are questions too extensive to be further adverted to in this place. We will rather say, as being more pertinent to our present design, that if endowments (like the Church property) originally set apart for what was then deemed the highest spiritual culture, were diverted to the purposes of the highest spiritual culture which the intellects of a subsequent age could devise, there would be no departure from the intentions of the original owners, but, on the contrary, a faithful fulfilment of them, when a literal and servile adherence to the mere accidents of the appropriation would be the surest means of defeating its essentials. The perfect lawfulness of such an alienation as this, is explicitly laid down by the eminent writer to whom we have referred. It is part of his doctrine, that the State is at liberty to withdraw the endowment from its existing possessors, whenever any body of persons can be found, whether ministers of religion or not, by whom the ends of the establishment, as he understands them, are likely to be more perfectly fulfilled.

It is the more important to place this admission upon record, as the most able and accomplished of the rising defenders of the Church of England have evidently issued from Mr. Coleridge's school, and have taken their weapons chiefly from his store-house.

If, however, we seize upon the endowments of the Church, not for the civilization and cultivation of the minds of our people, but to pay off a small fraction of the National Debt, or to supply a temporary financial exigency—we shall not only squander for the benefit of a single generation, the inheritance of posterity; we shall not only purchase an imperceptible good, by sacrificing a most important one; but by disregarding entirely the intentions of the original owners, we shall do our best to create a habit of paltering with the sacredness of a trust. It matters not that the property has now become *res nullius*, and is therefore, properly speaking, our own. It is not of our earning; others gave it to us, and for purposes which it may be a duty to set aside, but which cannot honestly be sacrificed to a convenience. We have not the slightest reason to believe that if the owners were alive, and still masters of their property, they would give it to us to be blown away in gunpowder, or to save a few years' house and window tax.

On a pressing exigency, as to avert a national bankruptcy, or repel a foreign invasion, the whole or any part of the endowment might be borrowed; as, in such a case, might any other property, public or private: but subject to the promptest possible repayment.

If any surplus remains, after as much has been

done for cultivating the minds of the people, as it is thought advisable to do without making them pay for it, the residue may be unobjectionably applied to the ordinary purposes of government: though it should even then be considered as a fund liable to be drawn upon to its full extent, if hereafter required, for purposes of spiritual culture.

A few words must be added on the kinds of foundation which ought not to be permitted: after which we shall conclude.

No endowment should be suffered to be made, or funds to be legally appropriated, for any purpose which is actually unlawful. If the law has forbidden any act, has constituted it an offence or injury, every mode of committing the act, not some particular modes only, ought to be prohibited. But if the purpose for which the foundation is constituted be not illegal, but only, in the opinion of the Legislature, inexpedient, this is by no means a sufficient reason for denying to the appropriation the protection of the law. The grounds of this opinion may be sufficiently collected from the preceding observations.

The only other restriction which we would impose upon the authors of Foundations, is, that the endowment shall not consist of land. The evils of allowing land to pass into mortmain, are universally acknowledged; and the trustees, besides, ought to have no concern with the money entrusted to them, except to apply it to its purposes. They may desire landed property as a source of power, which is a reason the more for refusing it to them: but as a source of income, it is not suited to their position. They should only have to receive an annuity, and that in

the simplest and least troublesome manner: not to realize a rental from a multitude of small tenants. Their time and attention ought not to be divided between their proper business and the duties of a landlord, or the superintendence and management of a landed estate.

THE CURRENCY JUGGLE.*

ALL friends of 'The Movement'—all persons, be they Ministers, Members of Parliament, or public writers, who look for the safety and well-being of England, not through the extinction, but through the further progress of political reform—commit, in our opinion, an egregious blunder, if they devote themselves chiefly to setting forth what innovations ought *not* to be made. Once open a door, and mischief may come in as well as go out—who doubts it? But our fears are not on that side: improvement, and not conservation, is the prize to be striven for just now. The tide of improvement having once begun to rise, we know that froth, and straws, and levities of all kinds, will be floated in multitudes up the stream; but it is not the business of Reformers to watch for their appearance, and break each successive bubble the moment it shows itself on the surface. These may be left to burst of themselves, or to be swept away by the efforts of such as feel themselves called upon by their duty to make that their occupation. Be it ours to find fit work for the new instrument of government; it is enough that our silence testifies against the unfit. No one can suffice for all things; and the time is yet far distant when a Radical Reformer can, without deserting a higher trust, allow himself

* *Tait's Magazine*, January 1833.

to assume, in the main, the garb and attitude of a Conservative.

There are, however, cases in which this wholesome rule of conduct must be departed from, and the evil incurred of a conflict between reformers and reformers in the face of the common enemy. Purposes may be proclaimed by part of the multitudinous body of professed Radicals, which, for the credit of the common cause, it may be imperative upon their fellow-Radicals to disavow; purposes such as cannot even continue to be publicly broached (not being as publicly protested against) without serious mischief. In this light we look upon all schemes for the confiscation of private property, in any shape, or under any pretext; and upon none more than the gigantic plan of confiscation which at present finds some advocates—a depreciation of the currency.

In substance, this is merely a roundabout (and very inconvenient) method of cutting down all debts to a fraction. Considering it in that light, it is not wonderful that fraudulent debtors should be its eager partisans; but what recommends it to them should have been enough to render it odious to all well-meaning, even if puzzle-headed, persons. That men who are not knaves in their private dealings should understand what the word depreciation means, and yet support it, speaks but ill for the existing state of morality on such subjects. It is something new in a civilized country. Several times, indeed, since paper credit existed, governments or public bodies have got into their hands the power of issuing a paper currency, without the restraint of convertibility, or any limitation of the amount. The most memorable

cases are those of Law's Mississippi scheme, the Assignats, and the Bank Restriction in 1797. On these various occasions a depreciation did in fact take place; but the intention was not professed of producing one, nor were its authors in the slightest degree aware that such would be the effect. The important truth, that currency is lowered (*cæteris paribus*) in value, by being augmented in quantity, was known solely to speculative philosophers, to Locke and Hume. The Practicals had never heard of it; or if they had, disdained it as visionary theory. Not an idea was entertained that a paper-money which rested on good security—which represented, as the phrase was, real wealth—could ever become depreciated by the mere amount of the issues.

But now, this is understood and reckoned upon, and is the very foundation of the scheme. Everybody, with a few ridiculous exceptions, now knows, that increasing the issues of inconvertible paper, lowers its value, and thereby takes from all who have currency in their possession, or who are entitled to receive any fixed sum, an indefinite aliquot part of their property or income; making a present of the amount to the issuers of the currency, and to the persons by whom the fixed sums are payable. This is seen as clearly as daylight; and do men therefore recoil from the idea? No; they coolly propose that the thing should be done; the *novæ tabulæ* issued; the transfer to the debtor of the lawful property of the creditor, and to the banker, of part of the property of every one who has money in his purse, deliberately and knowingly accomplished. And this is seriously entertained as a proposition *sub judice;* quite as fit to be discussed,

and as likely, *à priori*, to be found worthy of adoption, as any other.

At the head of the depreciation party are the two Messrs. Attwood, Matthias and Thomas: the first a Tory, and nominee of the Duke of Newcastle: his brother, the chairman of the Birmingham Union, one who, as a man of action, willing and able to stand in the breach, the organizer and leader of our late victorious struggle, has deserved well of his country. But the ability required for leading a congregated multitude to victory, whether in the war of politics or in that of battles, is one thing; the capacity to make laws for the commerce of a great nation, or even to interpret the commonest mercantile phenomena, is another. If any one still doubts this truth, he may learn it from Mr. Thomas Attwood's evidence before the Bank Committee.

Mr. Attwood has there given vent to speculations on currency, which prove that on a topic to which he has paid more attention than to any other, he is yet far beneath even his recent antagonist, Mr. Cobbett. Mr. Cobbett, in truth, sees, as clearly as any one, that to enact that sixpence should hereafter be called a shilling, would be of no use except to the person who owed a shilling before, and is now allowed to pay it with sixpence. And, it being no part of Mr. Cobbett's object to produce any gratuitous evil, he has common sense enough to see that it would be absurd, for the sake of operating upon existing contracts, to render all future ones impracticable except on the footing of gambling transactions, by making it impossible for any one to divine whether the shilling he undertakes to pay will be worth a penny or a pound at the time of payment.

Mr. Cobbett, therefore, is for calling a spade a spade, and cancelling, avowedly, a part, or the whole, as it may happen, of all existing debts; permitting the pound sterling to be worth twenty shillings, as before. Future creditors would thus have the benefit of knowing what they bargained for, though they might, indeed, feel a slight doubt whether it would be paid. In this scheme there is only knavery—no folly; save that of expecting that a great act of national knavery should be a national benefit. Mr. Attwood, on the other hand, is for the robbery too; but then it has not so much the character of a robbery in his eyes; for if it be done in the way of a depreciated paper currency, such a flood of wealth, he imagines, will be disengaged in the process, that the robber and the robbed, the lion and the lamb, will lie down lovingly together and wallow in riches. At the bottom of the fundholder's pocket, Mr. Attwood expects to find the philosopher's stone. As great a man as Mr. Attwood, the King of Brobdingnag, declared it to be his creed, that the man who calls into existence two blades of grass where only one grew before, deserves better of his country than the whole tribe of statesmen and warriors. Mr. Attwood has the same exalted opinion of the man who calls two pieces of paper into existence where only one piece existed before.

But first, we must say a few words respecting the robbery itself: we will revert afterwards to the accompanying juggle.

There has been, and is, one sophism, which has enabled many well-intentioned persons to disguise from their own consciences the real character of the contemplated fraud upon creditors. This sophism has some

superficial plausibility. More than half (it is argued) of the National Debt, as well as a great multitude of private engagements, were contracted in a depreciated currency; if, therefore, the interest or principal be paid without abatement, in money of the ancient standard, we are paying to public and private creditors more than they lent.

To this fallacy there are as many as three or four sufficient refutations, every one standing on its own independent ground. But the most conclusive and crushing of them all is not unfrequently overlooked, such is the shortness of men's memories, even about the events of their own time. Many who abhor the 'equitable adjustment,' join in condemning the restoration of the currency in 1819; concede that Peel's Bill plundered all debtors for the benefit of creditors; but urge, that the present fundholders and other creditors are, in great part, not the same persons who reaped the undue benefit; and that to claim damages from one set of persons, because another set have been overpaid, is no reparation, but a repetition of injustice. This is, indeed, true and irresistible, even though it stood alone: there needs no other argument; yet there *is* another, and a still more powerful one.

The restoration of the ancient standard, and the payment, in the restored currency, of the interest of a debt contracted in a depreciated one, was no injustice, but the simple performance of a plighted compact. All debts contracted during the Bank Restriction were contracted under as full an assurance as the faith of a nation could give, that cash payments were only temporarily suspended. At first, the suspension was to last a few weeks; next, a few months;

then, at farthest, a few years. Nobody even insinuated a suggestion that it should be perpetual, or that, when cash payments were resumed, less than a guinea should be given at the Bank for a pound note and a shilling. And to quiet the doubts and fears which would else have arisen, and which would have rendered it impossible for any Minister to raise another loan except at the most ruinous interest, it was made the law of the land, solemnly sanctioned by Parliament, that, six months after the peace, if not before, cash payments should be resumed. This, therefore, was distinctly one of the conditions of all the loans made during that period. It is a condition which has not been fulfilled. Instead of six months, more than as many years intervened between the peace and the resumption of cash payments. The nation, therefore, has not kept faith with the fundholder. Instead of having overpaid him, we have cheated him. Instead of making him a present (as is alleged) of a percentage equal to the enhancement of the currency, we continued, on the contrary, to pay his interest in depreciated paper several years after we were bound by contract to pay it in cash. And be it remarked, that the depreciation was at its highest during a part of that very period. If, therefore, there is to be a great day of national atonement for gone-by wrongs, the fundholders, instead of having anything to pay back, should be directed to send in their bill for the principal and interest of what they were defrauded of during the first years of the peace. Instead of this, it is proposed that, having already defrauded them of part of a benefit which was in their bond, and for which they gave an equivalent, we should

now force them to make restitution of the remainder.

That they gave an equivalent is manifest. The depreciation did not attain its maximum until the last few years of the war; indeed, it never amounted to anything considerable till then. It was during those years, also, that the largest sums were borrowed by the Government. At that time the effects of the Bank Restriction had begun to be well understood. The writings of Mr. Henry Thornton, Lord King, Mr. Ricardo, Mr. Huskisson, Mr. Blake, &c. and the Report of the Bullion Committee, had diffused a very general conviction that the currency was in fact depreciated, and that the Bank Directors acted on principles of which that evil was the natural consequence. Does anybody imagine that the loans of those years could have been raised, except on terms never before heard of under a civilized government, if there had been no engagement to pay the interest or the principal in money of any fixed standard; but it had been avowed, that to whatever point the arbitrary issues of the Bank might depress the value of the pound sterling, there it would be suffered to remain?

What avails it, then, to cavil about paying more than was borrowed? Everybody who borrows at interest, and keeps his engagement, pays more than he borrowed. The question is not, have we paid more than we borrowed? but, have we paid more than we contracted to pay? And the answer is, we have paid less. The fundholder, as the weaker party, has pocketed the injury; he only asks to be spared an additional and far greater one. We covenanted to pay in a metallic standard; we therefore are bound to

do it. To deliberate on such a question is as if a private person were to deliberate whether he should pick a pocket.

So much for the substance of the fraud. There is, however, no political crime so bad in itself but what may be made still worse by the manner of doing it. To rob all creditors, public and private, is bad enough in all conscience; but, for the sake of robbing existing creditors, to give to a set of bankers the power of taxing the community to an unlimited amount at their sole pleasure, by pouring forth paper, which could only get into circulation by lowering the value of all the paper already issued; what would this be but to erect a company of public plunderers, and place all our fortunes in their hands, merely because they offer to lend us our own money, and call the twofold operation 'affording facilities to trade?' It were better worth our while to settle a Blenheim or a Strathfieldsaye upon every banker in England. Pecuniary transactions would shortly come to an end; in a few months we should be in a state of barter. No one in his senses would take money in exchange for anything, except he were sure of being able to lay it out before the next day. Every one would begin to estimate his possessions, not by pounds sterling, but by sheep and oxen, as in the patriarchal times.

Mr. Attwood opines, that the multiplication of the circulating medium, and the consequent diminution of its value, do not merely diminish the pressure of taxes and debts, and other fixed charges, but give employment to labour, and that to an indefinite extent. If we could work miracles, we would not be niggardly of them. Possessing the power of calling

all the labourers of Great Britain into high wages and full employment, by no more complicated a piece of machinery than an engraver's plate, a man would be much to blame if he failed for want of going far enough. Mr. Attwood, accordingly, is for increasing the issues, until, with his paper loaves and fishes, he has fed the whole multitude, so that not a creature goes away hungry. Such a depreciation as would cause wheat to average ten shillings the bushel, he thinks, would suffice; but if, on trial, any labourer should declare that he still had an appetite, Mr. Attwood proffers to serve up another dish, and then another, up to the desired point of satiety. If a population thus satisfactorily fed should, under such ample encouragement, double or treble in its numbers, all that would be necessary, in this gentleman's opinion, is to depreciate the currency so much the more.

It is not that Mr. Attwood exactly thinks that a hungry people can be literally fed upon his bits of paper. His doctrine is, that paper money is not capital, but brings capital into fuller employment. A large portion of the national capital, especially of that part which consists of buildings and machinery, is now, he affirms, lying idle, in default of a market for its productions; those various productions being, as he admits, the natural market for one another, but being unable to exchange for each other, for want of a more plentiful medium of exchange, just as wheels will not turn with a spare allowance of oil. It was suggested to him, by some member of the Committee, that a small nominal amount of currency will suffice to exchange as many commodities as a larger one, saving that it will do it at lower prices;

which, however, when common to all commodities, are exactly as good to the sellers as high prices, except that these last may enable them to put off their creditors with a smaller real value. Mr. Attwood could not help admitting this; but it failed to produce any impression upon him; he could not perceive that high prices are in themselves no benefit; he could not get it out of his head that high prices occasion 'increased consumption,' 'increased demand,' and thereby give a stimulus to production. As if it were any increase of demand for bread to have two bits of paper to give for a loaf instead of one. As if being able to sell a pair of shoes for two rags instead of one, when each rag is only worth half as much, were any additional inducement to the production of shoes.

Whenever we meet with any notion more than commonly absurd, we expect to find that it is derived from what is miscalled 'practical experience;' namely, from something which has been seen, heard, and misunderstood. Such is the case with Mr. Attwood's delusion. What has imposed upon him is, as usual, what he would term 'a fact.' If prices could be kept as high as in 1825, all would be well; for, in 1825, not one well-conducted labourer in Great Britain was unemployed. The first liberty we shall take, is that of disbelieving the 'fact.' In its very nature, it is one which neither Mr. Attwood, nor any one, can personally know to be true; and his means of accurate knowledge are probably confined to the great manufacturing and exporting town which he personally inhabits. Thus much, however, we grant, that the buildings and machinery he speaks of were not lying idle in 1825, but were in full operation: many of

them, indeed, were erected during that frantic period; which is partly the cause of their lying idle now. But why was all the capital of the country in such unwonted activity in 1825? Because the whole mercantile public was in a state of insane delusion, in its very nature temporary. From the impossibility of exactly adjusting the operations of the producer to the wants of the consumer, it always happens that some articles are more or less in deficiency, and others in excess. To rectify these derangements, the healthy working of the social economy requires that in some channels capital should be in full, while in others it should be in slack, employment. But in 1825, it was imagined that *all* articles, compared with the demand for them, were in a state of deficiency. An unusual extension of the spirit of speculation, accompanied rather than caused by a great increase of paper credit, had produced a rise of prices, which *not* being supposed to be connected with a depreciation of the currency, each merchant or manufacturer considered to arise from an increase of the effectual demand for his particular article, and fancied there was a ready and permanent market for almost any quantity of that article which he could produce. Mr. Attwood's error is that of supposing that a depreciation of the currency *really* increases the demand for all articles, and consequently their production, because, under some circumstances, it may create a *false opinion* of an increase of demand, which false opinion leads, as the reality would do, to an increase of production, followed, however, by a fatal revulsion as soon as the delusion ceases. The revulsion in 1825 was not caused, as Mr. Attwood fancies, by a contraction of

the currency; the only cause of the real ruin, was the imaginary prosperity. The contraction of the currency was the consequence, not the cause, of the revulsion. So many merchants and bankers having failed in their speculations, so many, therefore, being unable to meet their engagements, their paper became worthless, and discredited all other paper. An issue of inconvertible bank notes might have enabled these debtors to cheat their creditors; but it would not have opened a market for one more loaf of bread, or one more yard of cloth; because what makes a demand for commodities is commodities, and not bits of paper.

It is no slight additional motive to rejoice in our narrow escape from marching to Parliamentary Reform through a violent revolution, when we think of the influence which would in that event have been exercised over Great Britain, for good or for ill, by men of whose opinions what precedes is a faithful picture.

We have no dread of them at present, because, together with the disapprobation of all instructed persons, they have to encounter a strong popular prejudice against paper money of every kind. The real misfortune would be, if they should wave their currency juggle, and coalesce with the clearer-sighted and more numerous tribe of political swindlers, who attack public and private debts directly and avowedly.

But even thus, we do not fear that they should succeed. There are enough of honest people in England to be too many for all the knaves; and it is only for want of discussion that these schemes find any favourers among sincere men. The mischief, and

it is not inconsiderable, is, that such things should be talked of, or thought of; that the time and talents which ought to be employed in making good laws and redressing real wrongs, should be taken up in counselling or in averting a national iniquity: to the injury of all good hopes, but most to the damage and discredit of the popular cause, which is almost undistinguishably identified in the minds of many excellent, but ill-informed and timid people, with the supremacy of brute force over right, and a perpetually impending spoliation of everything which one person has and another desires.

A FEW OBSERVATIONS ON THE FRENCH REVOLUTION.*

HISTORY is interesting under a two-fold aspect; it has a scientific interest, and a moral or biographic interest. A scientific, inasmuch as it exhibits the general laws of the moral universe acting in circumstances of complexity, and enables us to trace the connexion between great effects and their causes. A moral or biographic interest, inasmuch as it displays the characters and lives of human beings, and calls upon us, according to their deservings or to their fortunes, for sympathy, admiration, or censure.

Without entering at present, more than to the extent of a few words, into the scientific aspect of the history of the French Revolution, or stopping to define the place which we would assign to it as an event in universal history, we need not fear to declare utterly unqualified for estimating the French Revolution, any one who looks upon it as arising from causes peculiarly French, or otherwise than as one turbulent passage in a progressive transformation embracing the whole human race. All political revolutions, not effected by foreign conquest, originate in moral revolutions. The subversion of established institutions is merely one consequence of the previous subversion

* From a review of the first two volumes of Alison's *History of Europe*, *Monthly Repository*, August 1833.

of established opinions. The political revolutions of the last three centuries were but a few outward manifestations of a moral revolution, which dates from the great breaking loose of the human faculties commonly described as the 'revival of letters,' and of which the main instrument and agent was the invention of printing. How much of the course of that moral revolution yet remains to be run, or how many political revolutions it will yet generate before it be exhausted, no one can foretell. But it must be the shallowest view of the French Revolution, which can now consider it as anything but a mere incident in a great change in man himself—in his beliefs, in his principles of conduct, and therefore in the outward arrangements of society; a change so far from being completed, that it is not yet clear, even to the more advanced spirits, to what ultimate goal it is tending.

Now if this view be just (which we must be content for the present to assume), surely for an English historian, writing at this particular time concerning the French Revolution, there was something pressing for consideration, of greater interest and importance than the degree of praise or blame due to the few individuals who, with more or less consciousness of what they were about, happened to be personally implicated in that strife of the elements.

But also, if, feeling his incapacity for treating history from the scientific point of view, an author thinks fit to confine himself to the moral aspect; surely some less commonplace moral result, some more valuable and more striking practical lesson might admit of being drawn from this extraordinary passage of history, than merely this, that men should beware how they begin

a political convulsion, because they never can tell how or when it will end; which happens to be the one solitary general inference, the entire aggregate of the practical wisdom, deduced therefrom in Mr. Alison's book.

Of such stuff are ordinary people's moralities composed. Be good, be wise, always do right, take heed what you do, for you know not what may come of it. Does Mr. Alison, or any one, really believe that any human thing, from the fall of man to the last bankruptcy, ever went wrong for want of such maxims as these?

A political convulsion is a fearful thing: granted. Nobody can be assured beforehand what course it will take: we grant that too. What then? No one ought ever to do anything which has any tendency to bring on a convulsion: is that the principle? But there never was an attempt made to reform any abuse in Church or State, never any denunciation uttered or mention made of any political or social evil, which had not some such tendency. Whatever excites dissatisfaction with any one of the arrangements of society, brings the danger of a forcible subversion of the entire fabric so much the nearer. Does it follow that there ought to be no censure of anything which exists? Or is this abstinence, peradventure, to be observed only when the danger is considerable? But that is whenever the evil complained of is considerable; because the greater the evil, the stronger is the desire excited to be freed from it, and because the greatest evils are always those which it is most difficult to get rid of by ordinary means. It would follow, then, that mankind are at liberty to throw off

small evils, but not great ones; that the most deeply-seated and fatal diseases of the social system are those which ought to be left for ever without remedy.

Men are not to make it the sole object of their political lives to avoid a revolution, no more than of their natural lives to avoid death. They are to take reasonable care to avert both those contingencies when there is a present danger, but not to forbear the pursuit of any worthy object for fear of a mere possibility.

Unquestionably it is possible to do mischief by striving for a larger measure of political reform than the national mind is ripe for; and so forcing on prematurely a struggle between elements, which, by a more gradual progress, might have been brought to harmonize. And every honest and considerate person, before he engages in the career of a political reformer, will inquire whether the moral state and intellectual culture of the people are such as to render any great improvement in the management of public affairs possible. But he will inquire too, whether the people are likely ever to be made better, morally or intellectually, without a *previous* change in the government. If not, it may still be his duty to strive for such a change at whatever risk.

What decision a perfectly wise man, at the opening of the French Revolution, would have come to upon these several points, he who knows most will be most slow to pronounce. By the Revolution, substantial good has been effected of immense value, at the cost of immediate evil of the most tremendous kind. But it is impossible, with all the light which has been, or probably ever will be, obtained on the subject, to do

more than conjecture whether France could have purchased improvement cheaper; whether any course which could have averted the Revolution, would not have done so by arresting all improvement, and barbarizing down the people of France into the condition of Russian boors.

A revolution, which is so ugly a thing, certainly cannot be a very formidable thing, if all is true that Conservative writers say of it. For, according to them, it has always depended upon the will of some small number of persons, whether there should be a revolution or not. They invariably begin by assuming that great and decisive immediate improvements, with a certainty of subsequent and rapid progress, and the ultimate attainment of all practicable good, may be had by peaceable means at the option of the leading reformers, and that to this they voluntarily prefer civil war and massacre, for the sake of marching somewhat more directly and rapidly towards their ultimate ends. Having thus made out a revolution to be so mere a *bagatelle*, that, except by the extreme of knavery or folly, it may always be kept at a distance; there is little difficulty in proving all revolutionary leaders knaves or fools. But unhappily theirs is no such enviable position; a far other alternative is commonly offered to them. We will hazard the assertion, that there has scarcely ever yet happened a political convulsion, originating in the desire of reform, where the choice did not, in the full persuasion of every person concerned, lie between all and nothing; where the actors in the revolution had not thoroughly made up their minds, that, without a revolution, the enemies of all reform would have the

entire ascendancy, and that not only there would be no present improvement, but the door would for the future be shut against every endeavour towards it.

Unquestionably, such was the conviction of those who took part in the French Revolution, during its earlier stages. They did not choose the way of blood and violence in preference to the way of peace and discussion. Theirs was the cause of law and order. The States General at Versailles were a body, legally assembled, legally and constitutionally sovereign of the country, and had every right which law and opinion could bestow upon them, to do all that they did. But as soon as they did anything disagreeable to the king's courtiers (at that time they had not even begun to make any alterations in the fundamental institutions of the country), the king and his advisers took steps for appealing to the bayonet. Then, and not till then, the adverse force of an armed people stood forth in defence of the highest constituted authority—the Legislature of their country—menaced with illegal violence. The Bastille fell; the popular party became the stronger; and success, which so often is said to be a justification, has here proved the reverse: men who would have been ranked with Hampden and Sidney if they had quietly waited to have their throats cut, passed for odious monsters because they have been victorious.

We have not now time nor space to discuss the quantum of the guilt which attaches, not to the authors of the Revolution, but to the various subsequent revolutionary governments, for the crimes of the Revolution. Much was done which could not have been done except by bad men. But whoever examines

faithfully and diligently the records of those times—whoever can conceive the circumstances and look into the minds even of the men who planned and perpetrated those enormities, will be the more fully convinced, the more he considers the facts, that all which was done had one sole object. That object was, according to the phraseology of the time, to *save* the Revolution; to save it, no matter by what means; to defend it against its irreconcilable enemies, within and without; to prevent the undoing of the whole work, the restoration of all which had been demolished, and the extermination of all who had been active in demolishing; to keep down the royalists, and drive back the foreign invaders; as the means to these ends, to erect all France into a camp, subject the whole French people to the obligations and the arbitrary discipline of a besieged city; and to inflict death, or suffer it, with equal readiness—death or any other evil—for the sake of succeeding in the object.

But nothing of all this is dreamed of in Mr. Alison's philosophy: he knows not enough, either of his professed subject, or of the universal subject, the nature of man, to have got even thus far, to have made this first step towards understanding what the French Revolution was. In this he is without excuse, for had he been even moderately read in the French literature subsequent to the Revolution, he would have found this view of the details of its history familiar to every writer and to every reader.

THOUGHTS ON POETRY AND ITS VARIETIES.*

1.

IT has often been asked, What is Poetry? And many and various are the answers which have been returned. The vulgarest of all—one with which no person possessed of the faculties to which Poetry addresses itself can ever have been satisfied—is that which confounds poetry with metrical composition: yet to this wretched mockery of a definition, many have been led back, by the failure of all their attempts to find any other that would distinguish what they have been accustomed to call poetry, from much which they have known only under other names.

That, however, the word 'poetry' imports something quite peculiar in its nature, something which may exist in what is called prose as well as in verse, something which does not even require the instrument of words, but can speak through the other audible symbols called musical sounds, and even through the visible ones which are the language of sculpture, painting, and architecture; all this, we believe, is and must be felt, though perhaps indistinctly, by all upon whom poetry in any of its shapes produces any impression beyond that of tickling the ear. The

* *Monthly Repository*, January and October 1833.

distinction between poetry and what is not poetry, whether explained or not, is felt to be fundamental: and where every one feels a difference, a difference there must be. All other appearances may be fallacious, but the appearance of a difference is a real difference. Appearances too, like other things, must have a cause, and that which can cause anything, even an illusion, must be a reality. And hence, while a half-philosophy disdains the classifications and distinctions indicated by popular language, philosophy carried to its highest point frames new ones, but rarely sets aside the old, content with correcting and regularizing them. It cuts fresh channels for thought, but does not fill up such as it finds ready-made; it traces, on the contrary, more deeply, broadly, and distinctly, those into which the current has spontaneously flowed.

Let us then attempt, in the way of modest inquiry, not to coerce and confine nature within the bounds of an arbitrary definition, but rather to find the boundaries which she herself has set, and erect a barrier round them; not calling mankind to account for having misapplied the word 'poetry,' but attempting to clear up the conception which they already attach to it, and to bring forward as a distinct principle that which, as a vague feeling, has really guided them in their employment of the term.

The object of poetry is confessedly to act upon the emotions; and therein is poetry sufficiently distinguished from what Wordsworth affirms to be its logical opposite, namely, not prose, but matter of fact or science. The one addresses itself to the belief, the other to the feelings. The one does its work by con-

vincing or persuading, the other by moving. The one acts by presenting a proposition to the understanding, the other by offering interesting objects of contemplation to the sensibilities.

This, however, leaves us very far from a definition of poetry. This distinguishes it from one thing, but we are bound to distinguish it from everything. To bring thoughts or images before the mind for the purpose of acting upon the emotions, does not belong to poetry alone. It is equally the province (for example) of the novelist: and yet the faculty of the poet and that of the novelist are as distinct as any other two faculties; as the faculties of the novelist and of the orator, or of the poet and the metaphysician. The two characters may be united, as characters the most disparate may; but they have no natural connexion.

Many of the greatest poems are in the form of fictitious narratives, and in almost all good serious fictions there is true poetry. But there is a radical distinction between the interest felt in a story as such, and the interest excited by poetry; for the one is derived from incident, the other from the representation of feeling. In one, the source of the emotion excited is the exhibition of a state or states of human sensibility; in the other, of a series of states of mere outward circumstances. Now, all minds are capable of being affected more or less by representations of the latter kind, and all, or almost all, by those of the former; yet the two sources of interest correspond to two distinct, and (as respects their greatest development) mutually exclusive, characters of mind.

At what age is the passion for a story, for almost

any kind of story, merely as a story, the most intense? In childhood. But that also is the age at which poetry, even of the simplest description, is least relished and least understood; because the feelings with which it is especially conversant are yet undeveloped, and not having been even in the slightest degree experienced, cannot be sympathized with. In what stage of the progress of society, again, is story-telling most valued, and the story-teller in greatest request and honour?—In a rude state like that of the Tartars and Arabs at this day, and of almost all nations in the earliest ages. But in this state of society there is little poetry except ballads, which are mostly narrative, that is, essentially stories, and derive their principal interest from the incidents. Considered as poetry, they are of the lowest and most elementary kind: the feelings depicted, or rather indicated, are the simplest our nature has; such joys and griefs as the immediate pressure of some outward event excites in rude minds, which live wholly immersed in outward things, and have never, either from choice or a force they could not resist, turned themselves to the contemplation of the world within. Passing now from childhood, and from the childhood of society, to the grown-up men and women of this most grown-up and unchildlike age—the minds and hearts of greatest depth and elevation are commonly those which take greatest delight in poetry; the shallowest and emptiest, on the contrary, are, at all events, not those least addicted to novel-reading. This accords, too, with all analogous experience of human nature. The sort of persons whom not merely in books, but in their lives, we find perpetually engaged

in hunting for excitement from without, are invariably those who do not possess, either in the vigour of their intellectual powers or in the depth of their sensibilities, that which would enable them to find ample excitement nearer home. The most idle and frivolous persons take a natural delight in fictitious narrative; the excitement it affords is of the kind which comes from without. Such persons are rarely lovers of poetry, though they may fancy themselves so, because they relish novels in verse. But poetry, which is the delineation of the deeper and more secret workings of human emotion, is interesting only to those to whom it recals what they have felt, or whose imagination it stirs up to conceive what they could feel, or what they might have been able to feel, had their outward circumstances been different.

Poetry, when it is really such, is truth; and fiction also, if it is good for anything, is truth: but they are different truths. The truth of poetry is to paint the human soul truly: the truth of fiction is to give a true picture of life. The two kinds of knowledge are different, and come by different ways, come mostly to different persons. Great poets are often proverbially ignorant of life. What they know has come by observation of themselves; they have found within them one highly delicate and sensitive specimen of human nature, on which the laws of emotion are written in large characters, such as can be read off without much study. Other knowledge of mankind, such as comes to men of the world by outward experience, is not indispensable to them as poets: but to the novelist such knowledge is all in all; he has to describe outward things, not the inward man; actions and

events, not feelings; and it will not do for him to be numbered among those who, as Madame Roland said of Brissot, know man but not *men*.

All this is no bar to the possibility of combining both elements, poetry and narrative or incident, in the same work, and calling it either a novel or a poem; but so may red and white combine on the same human features, or on the same canvas. There is one order of composition which requires the union of poetry and incident, each in its highest kind—the dramatic. Even there the two elements are perfectly distinguishable, and may exist of unequal quality, and in the most various proportion. The incidents of a dramatic poem may be scanty and ineffective, though the delineation of passion and character may be of the highest order; as in Goethe's admirable Torquato Tasso; or again, the story as a mere story may be well got up for effect, as is the case with some of the most trashy productions of the Minerva press: it may even be, what those are not, a coherent and probable series of events, though there be scarcely a feeling exhibited which is not represented falsely, or in a manner absolutely commonplace. The combination of the two excellencies is what renders Shakespeare so generally acceptable, each sort of readers finding in him what is suitable to their faculties. To the many he is great as a story-teller, to the few as a poet.

In limiting poetry to the delineation of states of feeling, and denying the name where nothing is delineated but outward objects, we may be thought to have done what we promised to avoid—to have not found, but made a definition, in opposition to the usage of language, since it is established by common

consent that there is a poetry called descriptive. We deny the charge. Description is not poetry because there is descriptive poetry, no more than science is poetry because there is such a thing as a didactic poem. But an object which admits of being described, or a truth which may fill a place in a scientific treatise, may also furnish an occasion for the generation of poetry, which we thereupon choose to call descriptive or didactic. The poetry is not in the object itself, nor in the scientific truth itself, but in the state of mind in which the one and the other may be contemplated. The mere delineation of the dimensions and colours of external objects is not poetry, no more than a geometrical ground-plan of St. Peter's or Westminster Abbey is painting. Descriptive poetry consists, no doubt, in description, but in description of things as they appear, not as they are; and it paints them not in their bare and natural lineaments, but seen through the medium and arrayed in the colours of the imagination set in action by the feelings. If a poet describes a lion, he does not describe him as a naturalist would, nor even as a traveller would, who was intent upon stating the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. He describes him by imagery, that is, by suggesting the most striking likenesses and contrasts which might occur to a mind contemplating the lion, in the state of awe, wonder, or terror, which the spectacle naturally excites, or is, on the occasion, supposed to excite. Now this is describing the lion professedly, but the state of excitement of the spectator really. The lion may be described falsely or with exaggeration, and the poetry be all the better; but if the human emotion be not

painted with scrupulous truth, the poetry is bad poetry, *i.e.* is not poetry at all, but a failure.

Thus far our progress towards a clear view of the essentials of poetry has brought us very close to the last two attempts at a definition of poetry which we happen to have seen in print, both of them by poets and men of genius. The one is by Ebenezer Elliott, the author of Corn-Law Rhymes, and other poems of still greater merit. 'Poetry,' says he, 'is impassioned truth.' The other is by a writer in Blackwood's Magazine, and comes, we think, still nearer the mark. He defines poetry, 'man's thoughts tinged by his feelings.' There is in either definition a near approximation to what we are in search of. Every truth which a human being can enunciate, every thought, even every outward impression, which can enter into his consciousness, may become poetry when shown through any impassioned medium, when invested with the colouring of joy, or grief, or pity, or affection, or admiration, or reverence, or awe, or even hatred or terror: and, unless so coloured, nothing, be it as interesting as it may, is poetry. But both these definitions fail to discriminate between poetry and eloquence. Eloquence, as well as poetry, is impassioned truth; eloquence, as well as poetry, is thoughts coloured by the feelings. Yet common apprehension and philosophic criticism alike recognise a distinction between the two: there is much that every one would call eloquence, which no one would think of classing as poetry. A question will sometimes arise, whether some particular author is a poet; and those who maintain the negative commonly allow, that though not a poet, he is a highly eloquent writer. The dis-

tinction between poetry and eloquence appears to us to be equally fundamental with the distinction between poetry and narrative, or between poetry and description, while it is still farther from having been satisfactorily cleared up than either of the others.

Poetry and eloquence are both alike the expression or utterance of feeling. But if we may be excused the antithesis, we should say that eloquence is *heard*, poetry is *over*heard. Eloquence supposes an audience; the peculiarity of poetry appears to us to lie in the poet's utter unconsciousness of a listener. Poetry is feeling confessing itself to itself, in moments of solitude, and embodying itself in symbols which are the nearest possible representations of the feeling in the exact shape in which it exists in the poet's mind. Eloquence is feeling pouring itself out to other minds, courting their sympathy, or endeavouring to influence their belief or move them to passion or to action.

All poetry is of the nature of soliloquy. It may be said that poetry which is printed on hot-pressed paper and sold at a bookseller's shop, is a soliloquy in full dress, and on the stage. It is so; but there is nothing absurd in the idea of such a mode of soliloquizing. What we have said to ourselves, we may tell to others afterwards; what we have said or done in solitude, we may voluntarily reproduce when we know that other eyes are upon us. But no trace of consciousness that any eyes are upon us must be visible in the work itself. The actor knows that there is an audience present; but if he act as though he knew it, he acts ill. A poet may write poetry not only with the intention of printing it, but for the express purpose of being paid for it; that it should

be poetry, being written under such influences, is less probable; not, however, impossible; but no otherwise possible than if he can succeed in excluding from his work every vestige of such lookings-forth into the outward and every-day world, and can express his emotions exactly as he has felt them in solitude, or as he is conscious that he should feel them though they were to remain for ever unuttered, or (at the lowest) as he knows that others feel them in similar circumstances of solitude. But when he turns round and addresses himself to another person; when the act of utterance is not itself the end, but a means to an end,—viz. by the feelings he himself expresses, to work upon the feelings, or upon the belief, or the will, of another,—when the expression of his emotions, or of his thoughts tinged by his emotions, is tinged also by that purpose, by that desire of making an impression upon another mind, then it ceases to be poetry, and becomes eloquence.

Poetry, accordingly, is the natural fruit of solitude and meditation; eloquence, of intercourse with the world. The persons who have most feeling of their own, if intellectual culture has given them a language in which to express it, have the highest faculty of poetry; those who best understand the feelings of others, are the most eloquent. The persons, and the nations, who commonly excel in poetry, are those whose character and tastes render them least dependent upon the applause, or sympathy, or concurrence of the world in general. Those to whom that applause, that sympathy, that concurrence are most necessary, generally excel most in eloquence. And hence, perhaps, the French, who are the least poetical of all

great and intellectual nations, are among the most eloquent: the French, also, being the most sociable, the vainest, and the least self-dependent.

If the above be, as we believe, the true theory of the distinction commonly admitted between eloquence and poetry; or even though it be not so, yet if, as we cannot doubt, the distinction above stated be a real *bonâ fide* distinction, it will be found to hold, not merely in the language of words, but in all other language, and to intersect the whole domain of art.

Take, for example, music: we shall find in that art, so peculiarly the expression of passion, two perfectly distinct stiles; one of which may be called the poetry, the other the oratory of music. This difference, being seized, would put an end to much musical sectarianism. There has been much contention whether the music of the modern Italian school, that of Rossini and his successors, be impassioned or not. Without doubt, the passion it expresses is not the musing, meditative tenderness, or pathos, or grief of Mozart or Beethoven. Yet it is passion, but garrulous passion—the passion which pours itself into other ears; and therein the better calculated for dramatic effect, having a natural adaptation for dialogue. Mozart also is great in musical oratory; but his most touching compositions are in the opposite stile—that of soliloquy. Who can imagine 'Dove sono' *heard?* We imagine it *over*heard.

Purely pathetic music commonly partakes of soliloquy. The soul is absorbed in its distress, and though there may be bystanders, it is not thinking of them. When the mind is looking within, and not without, its state does not often or rapidly vary; and hence

the even, uninterrupted flow, approaching almost to monotony, which a good reader, or a good singer, will give to words or music of a pensive or melancholy cast. But grief taking the form of a prayer, or of a complaint, becomes oratorical; no longer low, and even, and subdued, it assumes a more emphatic rhythm, a more rapidly returning accent; instead of a few slow equal notes, following one after another at regular intervals, it crowds note upon note, and often assumes a hurry and bustle like joy. Those who are familiar with some of the best of Rossini's serious compositions, such as the air 'Tu che i miseri conforti,' in the opera of 'Tancredi,' or the duet 'Ebben per mia memoria,' in 'La Gazza Ladra,' will at once understand and feel our meaning. Both are highly tragic and passionate; the passion of both is that of oratory, not poetry. The like may be said of that most moving invocation in Beethoven's 'Fidelio'—

'Komm, Hoffnung, lass das letzte Stern
Der Müde nicht erbleichen;'

in which Madame Schröder Devrient exhibited such consummate powers of pathetic expression. How different from Winter's beautiful 'Paga fui,' the very soul of melancholy exhaling itself in solitude; fuller of meaning, and, therefore, more profoundly poetical than the words for which it was composed—for it seems to express not simple melancholy, but the melancholy of remorse.

If, from vocal music, we now pass to instrumental, we may have a specimen of musical oratory in any fine military symphony or march: while the poetry of music seems to have attained its consummation in

Beethoven's Overture to Egmont, so wonderful in its mixed expression of grandeur and melancholy.

In the arts which speak to the eye, the same distinctions will be found to hold, not only between poetry and oratory, but between poetry, oratory, narrative, and simple imitation or description.

Pure description is exemplified in a mere portrait or a mere landscape—productions of art, it is true, but of the mechanical rather than of the fine arts, being works of simple imitation, not creation. We say, a mere portrait, or a mere landscape, because it is possible for a portrait or a landscape, without ceasing to be such, to be also a picture; like Turner's landscapes, and the great portraits by Titian or Vandyke.

Whatever in painting or sculpture expresses human feeling—or character, which is only a certain state of feeling grown habitual—may be called, according to circumstances, the poetry, or the eloquence, of the painter's or the sculptor's art: the poetry, if the feeling declares itself by such signs as escape from us when we are unconscious of being seen; the oratory, if the signs are those we use for the purpose of voluntary communication.

The narrative style answers to what is called historical painting, which it is the fashion among connoisseurs to treat as the climax of the pictorial art. That it is the most difficult branch of the art we do not doubt, because, in its perfection, it includes the perfection of all the other branches: as in like manner an epic poem, though in so far as it is epic (*i.e.* narrative) it is not poetry at all, is yet esteemed the greatest effort of poetic genius, because there is no

kind whatever of poetry which may not appropriately find a place in it. But an historical picture as such, that is, as the representation of an incident, must necessarily, as it seems to us, be poor and ineffective. The narrative powers of painting are extremely limited. Scarcely any picture, scarcely even any series of pictures, tells its own story without the aid of an interpreter. But it is the single figures which, to us, are the great charm even of an historical picture. It is in these that the power of the art is really seen. In the attempt to narrate, visible and permanent signs are too far behind the fugitive audible ones, which follow so fast one after another, while the faces and figures in a narrative picture, even though they be Titian's, stand still. Who would not prefer one Virgin and Child of Raphael, to all the pictures which Rubens, with his fat, frouzy Dutch Venuses, ever painted? Though Rubens, besides excelling almost every one in his mastery over the mechanical parts of his art, often shows real genius in *grouping* his figures, the peculiar problem of historical painting. But then, who, except a mere student of drawing and colouring, ever cared to look twice at any of the figures themselves? The power of painting lies in poetry, of which Rubens had not the slightest tincture—not in narrative, wherein he might have excelled.

The single figures, however, in an historical picture, are rather the eloquence of painting than the poetry: they mostly (unless they are quite out of place in the picture) express the feelings of one person as modified by the presence of others. Accordingly the minds whose bent leads them rather to eloquence than to poetry, rush to historical painting. The French

painters, for instance, seldom attempt, because they could make nothing of, single heads, like those glorious ones of the Italian masters, with which they might feed themselves day after day in their own Louvre. They must all be historical; and they are, almost to a man, attitudinizers. If we wished to give any young artist the most impressive warning our imagination could devise against that kind of vice in the pictorial, which corresponds to rant in the histrionic art, we would advise him to walk once up and once down the gallery of the Luxembourg. Every figure in French painting or statuary seems to be showing itself off before spectators: they are not poetical, but in the worst style of corrupted eloquence.

II.

NASCITUR POËTA is a maxim of classical antiquity, which has passed to these latter days with less questioning than most of the doctrines of that early age. When it originated, the human faculties were occupied, fortunately for posterity, less in examining how the works of genius are created, than in creating them; and the adage, probably, had no higher source than the tendency common among mankind to consider all power which is not visibly the effect of practice, all skill which is not capable of being reduced to mechanical rules, as the result of a peculiar gift. Yet this aphorism, born in the infancy of psychology, will perhaps be found, now when that science is in its adolescence, to be as true as an epigram ever is, that

is, to contain some truth: truth, however, which has been so compressed and bent out of shape, in order to tie it up into so small a knot of only two words that it requires an almost infinite amount of unrolling and laying straight, before it will resume its just proportions.

We are not now intending to remark upon the grosser misapplications of this ancient maxim, which have engendered so many races of poetasters. The days are gone by, when every raw youth whose borrowed phantasies have set themselves to a borrowed tune, mistaking, as Coleridge says, an ardent desire of poetic reputation for poetic genius, while unable to disguise from himself that he had taken no means whereby he might *become* a poet, could fancy himself a born one. Those who would reap without sowing, and gain the victory without fighting the battle, are ambitious now of another sort of distinction, and are born novelists, or public speakers, not poets. And the wiser thinkers understand and acknowledge that poetic excellence is subject to the same necessary conditions with any other mental endowment; and that to no one of the spiritual benefactors of mankind is a higher or a more assiduous intellectual culture needful than to the poet. It is true, he possesses this advantage over others who use the 'instrument of words,' that, of the truths which he utters, a larger proportion are derived from personal consciousness, and a smaller from philosophic investigation. But the power itself of discriminating between what really is consciousness, and what is only a process of inference completed in a single instant—and the capacity of distinguishing whether that of which the mind is conscious be an

eternal truth, or but a dream—are among the last results of the most matured and perfect intellect. Not to mention that the poet, no more than any other person who writes, confines himself altogether to intuitive truths, nor has any means of communicating even these but by words, every one of which derives all its power of conveying a meaning, from a whole host of acquired notions, and facts learnt by study and experience.

Nevertheless, it seems undeniable in point of fact, and consistent with the principles of a sound metaphysics, that there are poetic *natures*. There is a mental and physical constitution or temperament, peculiarly fitted for poetry. This temperament will not of itself make a poet, no more than the soil will the fruit; and as good fruit may be raised by culture from indifferent soils, so may good poetry from naturally unpoetical minds. But the poetry of one who is a poet by nature, will be clearly and broadly distinguishable from the poetry of mere culture. It may not be truer; it may not be more useful; but it will be different: fewer will appreciate it, even though many should affect to do so; but in those few it will find a keener sympathy, and will yield them a deeper enjoyment.

One may write genuine poetry, and not be a poet; for whosoever writes out truly any human feeling, writes poetry. All persons, even the most unimaginative, in moments of strong emotion, speak poetry; and hence the drama is poetry, which else were always prose, except when a poet is one of the characters. What *is* poetry, but the thoughts and words in which emotion spontaneously embodies itself? As there are

few who are not, at least for some moments and in some situations, capable of some strong feeling, poetry is natural to most persons at some period of their lives. And any one whose feelings are genuine, though but of the average strength,—if he be not diverted by uncongenial thoughts or occupations from the indulgence of them, and if he acquire by culture, as all persons may, the faculty of delineating them correctly,—has it in his power to be a poet, so far as a life passed in writing unquestionable poetry may be considered to confer that title. But *ought* it to do so? Yes, perhaps, in a collection of 'British Poets.' But 'poet' is the name also of a variety of man, not solely of the author of a particular variety of book: now, to have written whole volumes of real poetry is possible to almost all kinds of characters, and implies no greater peculiarity of mental construction, than to be the author of a history, or a novel.

Whom, then, shall we call poets? Those who are so constituted, that emotions are the links of association by which their ideas, both sensuous and spiritual, are connected together. This constitution belongs (within certain limits) to all in whom poetry is a pervading principle. In all others, poetry is something extraneous and superinduced: something out of themselves, foreign to the habitual course of their everyday lives and characters; a world to which they may make occasional visits, but where they are sojourners, not dwellers, and which, when out of it, or even when in it, they think of, peradventure, but as a phantom-world, a place of *ignes fatui* and spectral illusions. Those only who have the peculiarity of association which we have mentioned, and which is a natural

though not an universal consequence of intense sensibility, instead of seeming not themselves when they are uttering poetry, scarcely seem themselves when uttering anything to which poetry is foreign. Whatever be the thing which they are contemplating, if it be capable of connecting itself with their emotions, the aspect under which it first and most naturally paints itself to them, is its poetic aspect. The poet of culture [illegible] his object in prose, and describes it in poetry; the poet of nature actually sees it in poetry.

This point is perhaps worth some little illustration; the rather, as metaphysicians (the ultimate arbiters of all philosophical criticism), while they have busied themselves for two thousand years, more or less, about the few *universal* laws of human nature, have strangely neglected the analysis of its *diversities*. Of these, none lie deeper or reach further than the varieties which difference of nature and of education makes in what may be termed the habitual bond of association. In a mind entirely uncultivated, which is also without any strong feelings, objects whether of sense or of intellect arrange themselves in the mere casual order in which they have been seen, heard, or otherwise perceived. Persons of this sort may be said to think chronologically. If they remember a fact, it is by reason of a fortuitous coincidence with some trifling incident or circumstance which took place at the very time. If they have a story to tell, or testimony to deliver in a witness-box, their narrative must follow the exact order in which the events took place: *dodge* them, and the thread of association is broken; they cannot go on. Their associations, to use the language of philosophers, are chiefly of the successive, not the syn-

chronous kind, and whether successive or synchronous, are mostly casual.

To the man of science, again, or of business, objects group themselves according to the artificial classifications which the understanding has voluntarily made for the convenience of thought or of practice. But where any of the impressions are vivid and intense, the associations into which these enter are the ruling ones: it being a well-known law of association, that the stronger a feeling is, the more quickly and strongly it associates itself with any other object or feeling. Where, therefore, nature has given strong feelings, and education has not created factitious tendencies stronger than the natural ones, the prevailing associations will be those which connect objects and ideas with emotions, and with each other through the intervention of emotions. Thoughts and images will be linked together, according to the similarity of the feelings which cling to them. A thought will introduce a thought by first introducing a feeling which is allied with it. At the centre of each group of thoughts or images will be found a feeling; and the thoughts or images will be there only because the feeling was there. The combinations which the mind puts together, the pictures which it paints, the wholes which Imagination constructs out of the materials supplied by Fancy, will be indebted to some dominant *feeling*, not as in other natures to a dominant *thought*, for their unity and consistency of character, for what distinguishes them from incoherencies.

The difference, then, between the poetry of a poet, and the poetry of a cultivated but not naturally poetic mind, is, that in the latter, with however bright a

halo of feeling the thought may be surrounded and glorified, the thought itself is always the conspicuous object; while the poetry of a poet is Feeling itself, employing Thought only as the medium of its expression. In the one, feeling waits upon thought; in the other, thought upon feeling. The one writer has a distinct aim, common to him with any other didactic author; he desires to convey the thought, and he conveys it clothed in the feelings which it excites in himself, or which he deems most appropriate to it. The other merely pours forth the overflowing of his feelings; and all the thoughts which those feelings suggest are floated promiscuously along the stream.

It may assist in rendering our meaning intelligible, if we illustrate it by a parallel between the two English authors of our own day, who have produced the greatest quantity of true and enduring poetry, Wordsworth and Shelley. Apter instances could not be wished for; the one might be cited as the type, the *exemplar*, of what the poetry of culture may accomplish: the other as perhaps the most striking example ever known of the poetic temperament. How different, accordingly, is the poetry of these two great writers! In Wordsworth, the poetry is almost always the mere setting of a thought. The thought may be more valuable than the setting, or it may be less valuable, but there can be no question as to which was first in his mind: what he is impressed with, and what he is anxious to impress, is some proposition, more or less distinctly conceived; some truth, or something which he deems such. He lets the thought dwell in his mind, till it excites, as is the nature of thought,

other thoughts, and also such feelings as the measure of his sensibility is adequate to supply. Among these thoughts and feelings, had he chosen a different walk of authorship (and there are many in which he might equally have excelled), he would probably have made a different selection of media for enforcing the parent thought: his habits, however, being those of poetic composition, he selects in preference the strongest feelings, and the thoughts with which most of feeling is naturally or habitually connected. His poetry, therefore, may be defined to be, his thoughts, coloured by, and impressing themselves by means of, emotions. Such poetry, Wordsworth has occupied a long life in producing. And well and wisely has he so done. Criticisms, no doubt, may be made occasionally both upon the thoughts themselves, and upon the skill he has demonstrated in the choice of his media: for, an affair of skill and study, in the most rigorous sense, it evidently was. But he has not laboured in vain: he has exercised, and continues to exercise, a powerful, and mostly a highly beneficial influence over the formation and growth of not a few of the most cultivated and vigorous of the youthful minds of our time, over whose heads poetry of the opposite description would have flown, for want of an original organization, physical or mental, in sympathy with it.

On the other hand, Wordsworth's poetry is never bounding, never ebullient; has little even of the appearance of spontaneousness: the well is never so full that it overflows. There is an air of calm deliberateness about all he writes, which is not characteristic of the poetic temperament: his poetry seems one

thing, himself another; he seems to be poetical because he wills to be so, not because he cannot help it: did he will to dismiss poetry, he need never again, it might almost seem, have a poetical thought. He never seems *possessed* by any feeling; no emotion seems ever so strong as to have entire sway, for the time being, over the current of his thoughts. He never, even for the space of a few stanzas, appears entirely given up to exultation, or grief, or pity, or love, or admiration, or devotion, or even animal spirits. He now and then, though seldom, attempts to write as if he were; and never, we think, without leaving an impression of poverty: as the brook which on nearly level ground quite fills its banks, appears but a thread when running rapidly down a precipitous declivity. He has feeling enough to form a decent, graceful, even beautiful decoration to a thought which is in itself interesting and moving; but not so much as suffices to stir up the soul by mere sympathy with itself in its simplest manifestation, nor enough to summon up that array of 'thoughts of power' which in a richly stored mind always attends the call of really intense feeling. It is for this reason, doubtless, that the genius of Wordsworth is essentially unlyrical. Lyric poetry, as it was the earliest kind, is also, if the view we are now taking of poetry be correct, more eminently and peculiarly poetry than any other: it is the poetry most natural to a really poetic temperament, and least capable of being succesfully imitated by one not so endowed by nature.

Shelley is the very reverse of all this. Where Wordsworth is strong, he is weak; where Words-

worth is weak, he is strong. Culture, that culture by which Wordsworth has reared from his own inward nature the richest harvest ever brought forth by a soil of so little depth, is precisely what was wanting to Shelley: or let us rather say, he had not, at the period of his deplorably early death, reached sufficiently far in that intellectual progression of which he was capable, and which, if it has done so much for greatly inferior natures, might have made of him the most perfect, as he was already the most gifted of our poets. For him, voluntary mental discipline had done little: the vividness of his emotions and of his sensations had done all. He seldom follows up an idea; it starts into life, summons from the fairy-land of his inexhaustible fancy some three or four bold images, then vanishes, and straight he is off on the wings of some casual association into quite another sphere. He had scarcely yet acquired the consecutiveness of thought necessary for a long poem; his more ambitious compositions too often resemble the scattered fragments of a mirror; colours brilliant as life, single images without end, but no picture. It is only when under the overruling influence of some one state of feeling, either actually experienced, or summoned up in the vividness of reality by a fervid imagination, that he writes as a great poet; unity of feeling being to him the harmonizing principle which a central idea is to minds of another class, and supplying the coherency and consistency which would else have been wanting. Thus it is in many of his smaller, and especially his lyrical poems. They are obviously written to exhale, perhaps to relieve, a state of feeling, or of conception of feeling, almost

oppressive from its vividness. The thoughts and imagery are suggested by the feeling, and are such as it finds unsought. The state of feeling may be either of soul or of sense, or oftener (might we not say invariably?) of both: for the poetic temperament is usually, perhaps always, accompanied by exquisite senses. The exciting cause may be either an object or an idea. But whatever of sensation enters into the feeling, must not be local, or consciously organic; it is a condition of the whole frame, not of a part only. Like the state of sensation produced by a fine climate, or indeed like all strongly pleasurable or painful sensations in an impassioned nature, it pervades the entire nervous system. States of feeling, whether sensuous or spiritual, which thus possess the whole being, are the fountains of that which we have called the poetry of poets; and which is little else than a pouring forth of the thoughts and images that pass across the mind while some permanent state of feeling is occupying it.

To the same original fineness of organization, Shelley was doubtless indebted for another of his rarest gifts, that exuberance of imagery, which when unrepressed, as in many of his poems it is, amounts to a fault. The susceptibility of his nervous system, which made his emotions intense, made also the impressions of his external senses deep and clear: and agreeably to the law of association by which, as already remarked, the strongest impressions are those which associate themselves the most easily and strongly, these vivid sensations were readily recalled to mind by all objects or thoughts which had coexisted with them, and by all feelings which in any

degree resembled them. Never did a fancy so teem with sensuous imagery as Shelley's. Wordsworth economizes an image, and detains it until he has distilled all the poetry out of it, and it will not yield a drop more: Shelley lavishes his with a profusion which is unconscious because it is inexhaustible.

If, then, the maxim *Nascitur poëta*, mean, either that the power of producing poetical compositions is a peculiar faculty which the poet brings into the world with him, which grows with his growth like any of his bodily powers, and is as independent of culture as his height, and his complexion; or that any natural peculiarity whatever is implied in producing poetry, real poetry, and in any quantity—such poetry too, as, to the majority of educated and intelligent readers, shall appear quite as good as, or even better than, any other; in either sense the doctrine is false. And nevertheless, there *is* poetry which could not emanate but from a mental and physical constitution peculiar, not in the kind, but in the degree of its susceptibility: a constitution which makes its possessor capable of greater happiness than mankind in general, and also of greater unhappiness; and because greater, so also more various. And such poetry, to all who know enough of nature to own it as being in nature, is much more poetry, is poetry in a far higher sense, than any other; since the common element of all poetry, that which constitutes poetry, human feeling, enters far more largely into this than into the poetry of culture. Not only because the natures which we have called poetical, really feel more, and consequently have more feeling to express; but because, the capacity of feeling being so great, feeling, when excited

and not voluntarily resisted, seizes the helm of their thoughts, and the succession of ideas and images becomes the mere utterance of an emotion; not, as in other natures, the emotion a mere ornamental colouring of the thought.

Ordinary education and the ordinary course of life are constantly at work counteracting this quality of mind, and substituting habits more suitable to their own ends: if instead of substituting they were content to superadd, there would be nothing to complain of. But when will education consist, not in repressing any mental faculty or power, from the uncontrolled action of which danger is apprehended, but in training up to its proper strength the corrective and antagonist power?

In whomsoever the quality which we have described exists, and is not stifled, that person is a poet. Doubtless he is a greater poet in proportion as the fineness of his perceptions, whether of sense or of internal consciousness, furnishes him with an ampler supply of lovely images—the vigour and richness of his intellect, with a greater abundance of moving thoughts. For it is through these thoughts and images that the feeling speaks, and through their impressiveness that it impresses itself, and finds response in other hearts; and from these media of transmitting it (contrary to the laws of physical nature) increase of intensity is reflected back upon the feeling itself. But all these it is possible to have, and not be a poet; they are mere materials, which the poet shares in common with other people. What constitutes the poet is not the imagery nor the thoughts, nor even the feelings, but the law according

to which they are called up. He is a poet, not because he has ideas of any particular kind, but because the succession of his ideas is subordinate to the course of his emotions.

Many who have never acknowledged this in theory, bear testimony to it in their particular judgments. In listening to an oration, or reading a written discourse not professedly poetical, when do we begin to feel that the speaker or author is putting off the character of the orator or the prose writer, and is passing into the poet? Not when he begins to show strong feeling; *then* we merely say, he is in earnest, he feels what he says; still less when he expresses himself in imagery; then, unless illustration be manifestly his sole object, we are apt to say, this is affectation. It is when the feeling (instead of passing away, or, if it continue, letting the train of thoughts run on exactly as they would have done if there were no influence at work but the mere intellect) becomes itself the originator of another train of association, which expels or blends with the former; when (for example) either his words, or the mode of their arrangement, are such as we spontaneously use only when in a state of excitement, proving that the mind is at least as much occupied by a passive state of its own feelings, as by the desire of attaining the premeditated end which the discourse has in view.*

Our judgments of authors who lay actual claim to

* And this, we may remark by the way, seems to point to the true theory of poetic diction; and to suggest the true answer to as much as is erroneous of Wordsworth's celebrated doctrine on that subject. For on the one hand, *all* language which is the natural expression of feeling, is really poetical, and will be felt as such, apart from conventional associa-

the title of poets, follow the same principle. Whenever, after a writer's meaning is fully understood, it is still matter of reasoning and discussion whether he is a poet or not, he will be found to be wanting in the characteristic peculiarity of association so often adverted to. When, on the contrary, after reading or hearing one or two passages, we instinctively and without hesitation cry out, This is a poet, the probability is, that the passages are strongly marked with this peculiar quality. And we may add that in such case, a critic who, not having sufficient feeling to respond to the poetry, is also without sufficient philosophy to understand it though he feel it not, will be apt to pronounce, not 'this is prose,' but 'this is exaggeration,' 'this is mysticism,' or, 'this is nonsense.'

Although a philosopher cannot, by culture, make himself, in the peculiar sense in which we now use the term, a poet, unless at least he have that peculiarity of nature which would probably have made poetry his earliest pursuit; a poet may always, by culture, make himself a philosopher. The poetic laws of association are by no means incompatible with the more ordinary laws; are by no means such as *must* have their course, even though a deliberate purpose require their suspension. If the peculiarities of the poetic temperament were uncontrollable in any poet, they might be supposed so in Shelley; yet how powerfully, in the Cenci, does he coerce and restrain all the characteristic qualities of his genius; what

tions; but on the other, whenever intellectual culture has afforded a choice between several modes of expressing the same emotion, the stronger the feeling is, the more naturally and certainly will it prefer the language which is most peculiarly appropriated to itself, and kept sacred from the contact of more vulgar objects of contemplation.

severe simplicity, in place of his usual barbaric splendour; how rigidly does he keep the feelings and the imagery in subordination to the thought.

The investigation of nature requires no habits or qualities of mind, but such as may always be acquired by industry and mental activity. Because at one time the mind may be so given up to a state of feeling, that the succession of its ideas is determined by the present enjoyment or suffering which pervades it, this is no reason but that in the calm retirement of study, when under no peculiar excitement either of the outward or of the inward sense, it may form any combinations, or pursue any trains of ideas, which are most conducive to the purposes of philosophic inquiry; and may, while in that state, form deliberate convictions, from which no excitement will afterwards make it swerve. Might we not go even further than this? We shall not pause to ask whether it be not a misunderstanding of the nature of passionate feeling to imagine that it is inconsistent with calmness; whether they who so deem of it, do not mistake passion in the militant or antagonistic state, for the type of passion universally; do not confound passion struggling towards an outward object, with passion brooding over itself. But without entering into this deeper investigation; that capacity of strong feeling, which is supposed necessarily to disturb the judgment, is also the material out of which all *motives* are made; the motives, consequently, which lead human beings to the pursuit of truth. The greater the individual's capability of happiness and of misery, the stronger interest has that individual in arriving at truth; and when once that interest is felt, an impassioned nature

is sure to pursue this, as to pursue any other object, with greater ardour; for energy of character is commonly the offspring of strong feeling. If, therefore, the most impassioned natures do not ripen into the most powerful intellects, it is always from defect of culture, or something wrong in the circumstances by which the being has originally or successively been surrounded. Undoubtedly strong feelings require a strong intellect to carry them, as more sail requires more ballast: and when, from neglect, or bad education, that strength is wanting, no wonder if the grandest and swiftest vessels make the most utter wreck.

Where, as in some of our older poets, a poetic nature has been united with logical and scientific culture, the peculiarity of association arising from the finer nature so perpetually alternates with the associations attainable by commoner natures trained to high perfection, that its own particular law is not so conspicuously characteristic of the result produced, as in a poet like Shelley, to whom systematic intellectual culture, in a measure proportioned to the intensity of his own nature, has been wanting. Whether the superiority will naturally be on the side of the philosopher-poet or of the mere poet—whether the writings of the one ought, as a whole, to be truer, and their influence more beneficent, than those of the other—is too obvious in principle to need statement: it would be absurd to doubt whether two endowments are better than one; whether truth is more certainly arrived at by two processes, verifying and correcting each other, than by one alone. Unfortunately, in practice the matter is not quite so simple;

there the question often is, which is least prejudicial to the intellect, uncultivation or malcultivation. For, as long as education consists chiefly of the mere inculcation of traditional opinions, many of which, from the mere fact that the human intellect has not yet reached perfection, must necessarily be false; so long as even those who are best taught, are rather taught to know the thoughts of others than to think, it is not always clear that the poet of acquired ideas has the advantage over him whose feeling has been his sole teacher. For, the depth and durability of wrong as well as of right impressions, is proportional to the fineness of the material; and they who have the greatest capacity of natural feeling are generally those whose artificial feelings are the strongest. Hence, doubtless, among other reasons, it is, that in an age of revolutions in opinion, the cotemporary poets, those at least who deserve the name, those who have any individuality of character, if they are not before their age, are almost sure to be behind it. An observation curiously verified all over Europe in the present century. Nor let it be thought disparaging. However urgent may be the necessity for a breaking up of old modes of belief, the most strong-minded and discerning, next to those who head the movement, are generally those who bring up the rear of it.

PROFESSOR SEDGWICK'S DISCOURSE ON THE STUDIES OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE.*

IF we were asked for what end, above all others, endowed universities exist, or ought to exist, we should answer—To keep alive philosophy. This, too, is the ground on which, of late years, our own national endowments have chiefly been defended. To educate common minds for the common business of life, a public provision may be useful, but is not indispensable: nor are there wanting arguments, not conclusive, yet of considerable strength, to show that it is undesirable. Whatever individual competition does at all, it commonly does best. All things in which the public are adequate judges of excellence, are best supplied where the stimulus of individual interest is the most active; and that is where pay is in proportion to exertion: not where pay is made sure in the first instance, and the only security for exertion is the superintendence of government; far less where, as in the English universities, even that security has been successfully excluded. But there is an education of which it cannot be pretended that the public are competent judges; the education by which great minds are formed. To rear up minds

* *London Review*, April 1835.

with aspirations and faculties above the herd, capable of leading on their countrymen to greater achievements in virtue, intelligence, and social well-being; to do this, and likewise so to educate the leisured classes of the community generally, that they may participate as far as possible in the qualities of these superior spirits, and be prepared to appreciate them, and follow in their steps—these are purposes, requiring institutions of education placed above dependence on the immediate pleasure of that very multitude whom they are designed to elevate. These are the ends for which endowed universities are desirable; they are those which all endowed universities profess to aim at; and great is their disgrace, if, having undertaken this task, and claiming credit for fulfilling it, they leave it unfulfilled.

In what manner are these purposes—the greatest which any human institution can propose to itself—purposes which the English universities must be fit for, or they are fit for nothing—performed by those universities ?——*Circumspice.*

In the intellectual pursuits which form great minds, this country was formerly pre-eminent. England once stood at the head of European philosophy. Where stands she now? Consult the general opinion of Europe. The celebrity of England, in the present day, rests upon her docks, her canals, her railroads. In intellect she is distinguished only for a kind of sober good sense, free from extravagance, but also void of lofty aspirations; and for doing all those things which are best done where man most resembles a machine, with the precision of a machine. Valuable qualities, doubtless; but not precisely those by which

mankind raise themselves to the perfection of their nature, or achieve greater and greater conquests over the difficulties which encumber their social arrangements. Ask any reflecting person in France or Germany his opinion of England; whatever may be his own tenets—however friendly his disposition to us—whatever his admiration of our institutions, and of some parts of our national character; however alive to the faults and errors of his own countrymen, the feature which always strikes him in the English mind is the absence of enlarged and commanding views. Every question he finds discussed and decided on its own basis, however narrow, without any light thrown upon it from principles more extensive than itself; and no question discussed at all, unless parliament, or some constituted authority, is to be moved to-morrow or the day after to put it to the vote. Instead of the ardour of research, the eagerness for large and comprehensive inquiry, of the educated part of the French and German youth, what find we? Out of the narrow bounds of mathematical and physical science, not a vestige of a reading and thinking public engaged in the investigation of truth *as* truth, in the prosecution of thought for the sake of thought. Among few except sectarian religionists—and what they are we all know—is there any interest in the great problem of man's nature and life: among still fewer is there any curiosity respecting the nature and principles of human society, the history or the philosophy of civilization; nor any belief that, from such inquiries, a single important practical consequence can follow. Guizot, the greatest admirer of England among the Continental philosophers, nevertheless re-

marks that, in England, even great events do not, as they do everywhere else, inspire great ideas. Things, in England, are greater than the men who accomplish them.

But perhaps this degeneracy is the effect of some cause over which the universities had no control, and against which they have been ineffectually struggling. If so, those bodies are wonderfully patient of being baffled. Not a word of complaint escapes any of their leading dignitaries—not a hint that their highest endeavours are thwarted, their best labours thrown away; not a symptom of dissatisfaction with the intellectual state of the national mind, save when it discards the boroughmongers, lacks zeal for the Church, or calls for the admission of Dissenters within their precincts. On the contrary, perpetual boasting how perfectly they succeed in accomplishing all that they attempt; endless celebrations of the country's glory and happiness in possessing a youth so taught, so mindful of what they are taught. When any one presumes to doubt whether the universities are all that universities should be, he is not told that they do their best, but that the tendencies of the age are too strong for them; no—he is, with an air of triumph, referred to their fruits, and asked whether an education which has made English gentlemen what we see them, can be other than a good education? All is right so long as no one speaks of taking away their endowments, or encroaching upon their monopoly.* While they are thus eulogizing their own efforts, and the results of their efforts; philosophy—not any particular

* Written before the advent of the present comparatively enlightened body of University Reformers.

school of philosophy, but philosophy altogether—speculation of any comprehensive kind, and upon any deep or extensive subject—has been falling more and more into distastefulness and disrepute among the educated classes of England. Have those classes meanwhile learned to slight and despise these authorized teachers of philosophy, or ceased to frequent their schools? Far from it. The universities then may flourish, though the pursuits which are the end and justification of the existence of universities decay. The teacher thrives and is in honour, while that which he affects to teach vanishes from among mankind.

If the above reflections were to occur, as they well might, to an intelligent foreigner, deeply interested in the condition and prospects of English intellect, we may imagine with what avidity he would seize upon the publication before us. It is a discourse on the studies of Cambridge, by a Cambridge Professor, delivered to a Cambridge audience, and published at their request. It contains the opinion of one of the most liberal members of the University on the studies of the place; or, as we should rather say, on the studies which the place recommends, and which some few of its pupils actually prosecute. Mr. Sedgwick is not a mere pedant of a college, who defends the system because he has been formed by the system, and has never learned to see anything but in the light in which the system showed it to him. Though an intemperate, he is not a bigoted, partisan of the body to which he belongs; he can see faults as well as excellences, not merely in their mode of teaching, but

in some parts of what they teach. His intellectual pretensions, too, are high. Not of him can it be said that he aspires not to philosophy; he writes in the character of one to whom its loftiest eminences are familiar. Curiosity, therefore, cannot but be somewhat excited to know what he finds to say respecting the Cambridge scheme of education, and what notion may be formed of the place from the qualities he exhibits in himself, one of its favourable specimens.

Whatever be the value of Professor Sedgwick's Discourse in the former of these two points of view, in the latter we have found it, on examination, to be a document of considerable importance. The Professor gives his opinion (for the benefit chiefly, he says, of the younger members of the University, but in a manner, he hopes, 'not altogether unfitting to other ears') on the value of several great branches of intellectual culture, and on the spirit in which they should be pursued. Not satisfied with this, he proclaims in his preface another and a still more ambitious purpose —the destruction of what has been termed the Utilitarian theory of morals. 'He has attacked the utilitarian theory of morals, not merely because he thinks it founded on false reasoning, but because he also believes that it produces a degrading effect on the temper and conduct of those who adopt it.'

This is promising great things: to refute a theory of morals; and to trace its influence on the character and actions of those who embrace it. A better test of capacity for philosophy could not be desired. We shall see how Professor Sedgwick acquits himself of his two-fold task, and what were his qualifications for undertaking it.

From an author's mode of introducing his subject, and laying the outlines of it before the reader, some estimate may generally be formed of his capacity for discussing it. In this respect, the indications afforded by Mr. Sedgwick's commencement are not favourable. Before giving his opinion of the studies of the University, he had to tell us what those studies are. They are, first, mathematical and physical science; secondly, the classical languages and literature; thirdly (if some small matter of Locke and Paley deserve so grand a denomination), mental and moral science. For Mr. Sedgwick's purpose, this simple mode of designating these studies would have been sufficiently precise; but if he was determined to hit off their metaphysical characteristics, it should not have been in the following stile:—

'The studies of this place, as far as they relate to mere human learning, divide themselves into three branches: First, the study of the laws of nature, comprehending all parts of inductive philosophy. Secondly, the study of ancient literature, or, in other words, of those authentic records which convey to us an account of the feelings, the sentiments, and the actions of men prominent in the history of the most famous empires of the ancient world: in these works we seek for examples and maxims of prudence and models of taste. Thirdly, the study of ourselves, considered as individuals and as social beings: under this head are included ethics and metaphysics, moral and political philosophy, and some other kindred subjects of great complexity, hardly touched on in our academic system, and to be followed out in the more mature labours of after life.'—p. 10.

How many errors in expression and classification in one short passage! The 'study of the laws of nature' is spoken of as one thing, 'the study of our-

27167

selves' as another. In studying ourselves, are we not studying the laws of our nature? 'All parts of inductive philosophy' are placed under one head; 'ethics and metaphysics, moral and political philosophy,' under another. Are these no part of inductive philosophy? Of what philosophy, then, are they a part? Is not all philosophy, which is founded upon experience and observation, inductive?* What, again, can Mr. Sedgwick mean by calling 'ethics' one thing and 'moral philosophy' another? Moral philosophy must be either ethics or a branch of metaphysics—either the knowledge of our duty, or the theory of the feelings with which we regard our duty. What a loose description, too, of ancient literature—where no description at all was required. The writings of the ancients are spoken of as if there were nothing in them but the biographies of eminent statesmen.

This want of power to express accurately what is conceived, almost unerringly denotes inaccuracy in the conception itself: such verbal criticism, therefore, is far from unimportant. But the topics of a graver kind, which Mr. Sedgwick's Discourse suggests, are fully sufficient to occupy us, and to them we shall henceforth confine ourselves.

The Professor's survey of the studies of the Uni-

* It is just to Mr. Sedgwick to subjoin the following passage from the Preface to a later edition of his Discourse:—

'For many years it has been the habit of English writers, more especially those who have been trained at Cambridge, to apply the term *philosophy* only to those branches of exact science that are designated on the Continent by the name of *physics*. As this local use of a general term may lead to a misapprehension of the writer's intentions, it would be well if, in the following pages, the words *inductive philosophy*, and other like phrases, were accompanied with some word limiting their application to the exact physical sciences.'

versity commences with 'the study of the laws of nature,' or, to speak a more correct language, the laws of the material universe. Here, to a mind stored with the results of comprehensive thought, there lay open a boundless field of remark, of the kind most useful to the young students of the University. At the stage in education which they are supposed to have reached, the time was come for disengaging their minds from the microscopic contemplation of the details of the various sciences, and elevating them to the idea of Science as a whole—to the idea of human culture as a whole—of the place which those various sciences occupy in the former, and the functions which they perform in the latter. Though an actual analysis would have been impossible, there was room to present, in a rapid sketch, the *results* of an analysis, of the methods of the various physical sciences—the processes by which they severally arrive at truth: the peculiar logic of each science, and the light thrown thereby upon universal logic: the various kinds and degrees of evidence upon which the truths of those sciences rest; how to estimate them; how to adapt our modes of investigation to them: how far the habits of estimating evidence, which these sciences engender, are applicable to other subjects, and to evidence of another kind; how far inapplicable. Hence the transition was easy to the more extensive inquiry, what these physical studies are capable of doing for the mind; which of the habits and powers that constitute a fine intellect those pursuits tend to cultivate; what are those which they do not cultivate, those even (for such there are) which they tend to impede; by what other studies and intellectual exercises, by what

general reflections, or course of reading or meditation, those deficiencies may be supplied. The Professor might thus have shown (what it is usual only to declaim about) how highly a familiarity with mathematics, with dynamics, with even experimental physics and natural history, conduces both to strength and soundness of understanding; and yet how possible it is to be master of all these sciences, and to be unable to put two ideas together with a useful result, on any other topic. The youth of the university might have been taught to set a just value on these attainments, yet to see in them, as branches of general education, what they really are—the early stages in the formation of a superior mind; the instruments of a higher culture. Nor would it have been out of place in such a discourse, though perhaps not peculiarly appropriate to this part of it, to have added a few considerations on the tendency of scientific pursuits in general; the influence of habits of analysis and abstraction upon the character:—how, without those habits, the mind is the slave of its own accidental associations, the dupe of every superficial appearance, and fit only to receive its opinions from authority:—on the other hand, how their exclusive cultivation, while it strengthens the associations which connect means with ends, effects with causes, tends to weaken many of those upon which our enjoyments and our social feelings depend; and by accustoming the mind to consider, in objects, chiefly the properties on account of which we refer them to classes and give them general names, leaves our conceptions of them as individuals, lame and meagre:—how, therefore, the corrective and antagonist principle to the pursuits which deal with objects

only in the abstract, is to be sought in those which deal with them altogether in the concrete, clothed in properties and circumstances: real life in its most varied forms, poetry and art in all their branches.

These, and many kindred topics, a true philosopher, standing in the place of Professor Sedgwick, would, as far as space permitted, have illustrated and insisted on. But the Professor's resources supplied him only with a few trite commonplaces, on the high privilege of comprehending the mysteries of the natural world; the value of studies which give a habit of abstraction, and a 'power of concentration;' the use of scientific pursuits in saving us from languor and vacuity; with other truths of that small calibre. To these he adds, that 'the study of the higher sciences is well suited to keep down a spirit of arrogance and intellectual pride,' by convincing us of 'the harrow limitation of our faculties;' and upon this peg he appends a dissertation on the evidences of design in the universe—a subject on which much originality was not to be hoped for, and the nature of which may be allowed to protect feebleness from any severity of comment.

The Professor's next topic is the classical languages and literature. And here he begins by wondering. It is a common propensity of writers on natural theology to erect everything into a wonder. They cannot consider the greatness and wisdom of God, once for all, as proved, but think themselves bound to be finding fresh arguments for it in every chip or stone; and they think nothing a proof of greatness unless they can wonder at it; and to most minds a wonder explained is a wonder no longer. Hence a sort of vague feeling, as if, to their conceptions, God would not be

so great if he had made us capable of understanding more of the laws of his universe; and hence a reluctance to admit even the most obvious explanation, lest it should destroy the wonder.

The subject of Professor Sedgwick's wonder is a very simple thing—the manner in which a child acquires a language.

'I may recall to your minds,' says he, 'the wonderful ease with which a child comprehends the conventional signs of thought formed between man and man—not only learns the meaning of words descriptive of visible things; but understands, by a kind of rational instinct, the meaning of abstract terms, without ever thinking of the faculty by which he comes to separate them from the names of mere objects of sense. The readiness with which a child acquires a language may well be called a rational instinct: for during the time that his knowledge is built up, and that he learns to handle the implements of thought, he knows no more of what passes within himself, than he does of the structure of the eye, or of the properties of light, while he attends to the impressions on his visual sense, and gives to each impression its appropriate name.'—p. 33.

If whatever we do without understanding the machinery by which we do it, be done by a rational instinct, we learn to dance by instinct: since few of the dancing-master's pupils have ever heard of any one of the muscles which his instructions and their own sedulous practice give them the power to use. Do we grow wheat by 'a rational instinct,' because we know not how the seed germinates in the ground? We know by experience, not by instinct, that it does germinate, and on that assurance we sow it. A child learns a language by the ordinary laws of association;

by hearing the word spoken, on the various occasions on which the meaning denoted by it has to be conveyed. This mode of acquisition is better adapted for giving a loose and vague, than a precise, conception of the meaning of an abstract term; accordingly, most people's conceptions of the meaning of many abstract terms in common use remain always loose and vague. The rapidity with which children learn a language is not more wonderful than the rapidity with which they learn so much else at an early age. It is a common remark, that we gain more knowledge in the first few years of life, without labour, than we ever after acquire by the hardest toil, in double the time. There are many causes to account for this; among which it is sufficient to specify, that much of the knowledge we then acquire concerns our most pressing wants, and that our attention to outward impressions is not yet deadened by familiarity, nor distracted, as in grown persons, by a previously accumulated stock of inward feelings and ideas.

Against the general tendency of the Professor's remarks on the cultivation of the ancient languages, there is little to be said. We think with him, that 'our fathers have done well in making classical studies an early and prominent part of liberal education' (p. 34). We fully coincide in his opinion, that 'the philosophical and ethical works of the ancients deserve a much larger portion of our time than we' (meaning Cambridge) 'have hitherto bestowed on them' (p. 39). We commend the liberality (for, in a professor of an English University, the liberality

which admits the smallest fault in the university system of tuition deserves to be accounted extraordinary) of the following remarks:—

'It is notorious, that during many past years, while verbal criticism has been pursued with so much ardour, the works to which I now allude (coming home, as they do, to the business of life; and pregnant, as they are, with knowledge well fitted to fortify the reasoning powers) have, by the greater number of us, hardly been thought of; and have in no instance been made prominent subjects of academic training.'—p. 39.

'I think it incontestably true, that for the last fifty years our classical studies (with much to demand our undivided praise) have been too critical and formal; and that we have sometimes been taught, while straining after an accuracy beyond our reach, to value the husk more than the fruit of ancient learning: and if of late years our younger members have sometimes written prose Greek almost with the purity of Xenophon, or composed iambics in the finished diction of the Attic poets, we may well doubt whether time suffices for such perfection—whether the imagination and the taste might not be more wisely cultivated than by a long sacrifice to what, after all, ends but in verbal imitations.—In short, whether such acquisitions, however beautiful in themselves, are not gained at the expense of something better. This at least is true, that he who forgets that language is but the sign and vehicle of thought, and, while studying the word, knows little of the sentiment—who learns the measure, the garb, and fashion of ancient song, without looking to its living soul or feeling its inspiration—is not one jot better than a traveller in classic land, who sees its crumbling temples, and numbers, with arithmetical precision, their steps and pillars, but thinks not of their beauty, their design, or the living sculptures on their walls—or who counts the stones in the Appian way instead of gazing on the monuments of the 'eternal city.'—pp. 37-8.

The illustration which closes the above passage

(though, as is often the case with illustrations, it does not illustrate) is rather pretty: a circumstance which we should be sorry not to notice, as, amid much straining, and many elaborate flights of imagination, we have not met with any other instance in which the Professor makes so near an approach to actual eloquence.

We have said that we go all lengths with our author in claiming for classical literature a place in education, at least equal to that commonly assigned to it. But though we think his opinion right, we think most of his reasons wrong. As, for example, the following:—

'With individuals as with nations, the powers of imagination reach their maturity sooner than the powers of reason; and this is another proof that the severer investigations of science ought to be preceded by the study of languages; and especially of those great works of imagination which have become a pattern for the literature of every civilized tongue.' —p. 34.

This *dictum* respecting Imagination and Reason is only not a truism, because it is, as Coleridge would say, a falsism. Does the Professor mean that 'any great work of imagination'—the 'Paradise Lost,' for instance—could have been produced at an earlier age, or by a less matured or less accomplished mind, than the 'Mécanique Céleste?' Does he mean that a learner can appreciate Æschylus or Sophocles before he is old enough to understand Euclid or Lacroix? In nations again, the assertion, that imagination, in any but the vulgarest sense of the word, attains maturity sooner than reason, is so far from being correct, that throughout all history the two have

invariably flourished together; have, and necessarily must. Does Mr. Sedgwick think that any great work of imagination ever was, or can be, produced, without great powers of reason? Be the country Greece or Rome, Italy, France, or England, the age of her greatest eminence in poetry and the fine arts has been that of her greatest statesmen, generals, orators, historians, navigators—in one word, thinkers, in every department of active life; not, indeed, of her greatest philosophers, but only because Philosophy is the tardiest product of Reason itself.*

Of the true reasons, and there are most substantial and cogent ones, for assigning to classical studies a high place in general education, we find not a word in Mr. Sedgwick's tract; but, instead of them, much harping on the value of the writings of antiquity as 'patterns' and 'models.' This is lauding the abuse of classical knowledge as the use; and is a very bad lesson to 'the younger members' of the University. The study of the ancient writers has been of unspeakable benefit to the moderns; from which benefit, the attempts at direct imitation of those writers have been no trifling drawback. The necessary effect of imitating 'models' is, to set manner above matter. The imitation of the classics has perverted the whole taste of modern Europe on the subject of composition: it has made stile a subject of cultivation and of

* In the earlier stages of a nation's culture, the place of Philosophy is always pre-occupied by an established religion: all the more interesting questions to which philosophy addresses itself, find a solution satisfactory to the then state of human intellect, ready provided by the received creed. The old religion must have lost its hold on the more cultivated minds, before philosophy is applied to for a solution of the same questions. With the decline of Polytheism came the Greek philosophy; with the decline of Catholicism, the modern.

praise, independently of ideas; whereas, by the ancients, stile was never thought of but in complete subordination to matter. The ancients (in the good times of their literature) would as soon have thought of a coat in the abstract, as of stile in the abstract: the merit of a stile, in their eyes, was, that it exactly fitted the thought. Their first aim was, by the assiduous study of their subject, to secure to themselves thoughts worth expressing; their next was, to find words which would convey those thoughts with the utmost degree of nicety; and only when this was made sure, did they think of ornament. Their stile, therefore, whether ornamented or plain, grows out of their turn of thought; and may be admired, but cannot be imitated, by any one whose turn of thought is different. The instruction which Professor Sedgwick should have given to his pupils, was to follow no models; to attempt no stile, but let their thoughts shape out the stile best suited to them; to resemble the ancients, not by copying their manner, but by understanding their own subject as well, cultivating their faculties as highly, and taking as much trouble with their work, as the ancients did. All imitation of an author's stile, except that which arises from making his thoughts our own, is mere affectation and vicious mannerism.

In discussing the value of the ancient languages, Mr. Sedgwick touches upon the importance of ancient history. On this topic, on which so much, and of the most interesting kind, might have been said, he delivers nothing but questionable commonplaces. 'History,' says he, 'is, to our knowledge of man in his social capacity, what physical experiments are to our

knowledge of the laws of nature' (p. 42). Common as this notion is, it is a strange one to be held by a professor of physical science; for assuredly no person is satisfied with such evidence in studying the laws of the natural world, as history affords with respect to the laws of political society. The evidence of history, instead of being analogous to that of experiment, leaves the philosophy of society in exactly the state in which physical science was, before the method of experiment was introduced. The Professor should reflect, that we cannot make experiments in history. We are obliged, therefore, as the ancients did in physics, to content ourselves with such experiments as we find made to our hands; and these are so few, and so complicated, that little or nothing can be inferred from them. There is not a fact in history which is not susceptible of as many different explanations as there are possible theories of human affairs. Not only is history not the source of political philosophy, but the profoundest political philosophy is requisite to explain history; without it, all in history which is worth understanding remains mysterious. Can Mr. Sedgwick explain why the Greeks, in their brief career, so far surpassed their cotemporaries, or why the Romans conquered the world? Mr. Sedgwick mistakes the functions of history in political speculation. History is not the foundation, but the verification, of the social science; it corroborates, and often suggests, political truths, but cannot prove them. The proof of them is drawn from the laws of human nature; ascertained through the study of ourselves by reflection, and of mankind by actual intercourse with them. That what we know of former ages, like what we know of foreign

nations, is, with all its imperfections, of much use, by correcting the narrowness incident to personal experience, is undeniable; but the usefulness of history depends upon its being kept in the second place.

The Professor seems wholly unaware of the importance of accuracy, either in thought or in expression. 'In ancient history,' says he (p. 42), 'we can trace the fortunes of mankind under almost every condition of political and social life.' So far is this from being true, that ancient history does not so much as furnish an example of a civilized people in which the bulk of the inhabitants were not slaves. Again, 'all the successive actions we contemplate are at such a distance from us, that we can see their true bearings on each other undistorted by that mist of prejudice with which every modern political question is surrounded.' We appeal to all who are conversant with the modern writings on ancient history, whether even this is true. The most elaborate Grecian history which we possess is impregnated with the anti-Jacobin spirit in every line; and the 'Quarterly Review' laboured as diligently for many years to vilify the Athenian republic as the American.

Thus far, the faults which we have discovered in Mr. Sedgwick are of omission rather than of commission: or at worst, amount only to this, that he has contented himself with repeating the trivialities he found current. Had there been nothing but this to be said of the remainder of the Discourse, we should not have disturbed its peaceful progress to oblivion.

We have now, however, arrived at the opening of

that part of Professor Sedgwick's Discourse which is most laboured, and for the sake of which all the rest may be surmised to have been written,—his strictures on Locke's 'Essay on the Human Understanding,' and Paley's 'Principles of Moral Philosophy.' These works comprise what little of ethical and metaphysical instruction is given, or professed to be given, at Cambridge. The remainder of Mr. Sedgwick's Discourse is devoted to an attack upon them.

We assuredly have no thought of defending either work as a text-book, still less as the sole text-book, on their respective subjects, in any school of philosophy. Of Paley's work, though it possesses in a high degree some minor merits, we think, on the whole, meanly. Of Locke's Essay, the beginning and foundation of the modern analytical psychology, we cannot speak but with the deepest reverence; whether we consider the era which it constitutes in philosophy, the intrinsic value, even at the present day, of its thoughts, or the noble devotion to truth, the beautiful and touching earnestness and simplicity, which he not only manifests in himself, but has the power beyond almost all other philosophical writers of infusing into his reader. His Essay should be familiar to every student. But no work, a hundred and fifty years old, can be fit to be the sole, or even the principal work for the instruction of youth in a science like that of Mind. In metaphysics, every new truth sets aside or modifies much of what was previously received as truth. Berkeley's refutation of the doctrine of abstract ideas would of itself necessitate a complete revision of the phraseology of the most valuable parts of Locke's book. And the important speculations originated by

Hume and improved by Brown, concerning the nature of our experience, are acknowledged, even by the philosophers who do not adopt in their full extent the conclusions of those writers, to have carried the analysis of our knowledge and of the process of acquiring it, so much beyond the point where Locke left it, as to require that his work should be entirely recast.

Moreover, the book which has changed the face of a science, even when not superseded in its doctrines, is seldom suitable for didactic purposes. It is adapted to the state of mind, not of those who are ignorant of every doctrine, but of those who are instructed in an erroneous doctrine. So far as it is taken up with directly combating the errors which prevailed before it was written, the more completely it has done its work, the more certain it is of becoming superfluous, not to say unintelligible, without a commentary. And even its positive truths are defended against such objections only as were current in its own times, and guarded only against such misunderstandings as the people of those times were likely to fall into. Questions of morals and metaphysics differ from physical questions in this, that their aspect changes with every change in the human mind. At no two periods is the same question embarrassed by the same difficulties, or the same truth in need of the same explanatory comment. The fallacy which is satisfactorily refuted in one age, re-appears in another, in a shape which the arguments formerly used do not precisely meet; and seems to triumph, until some one, with weapons suitable to the altered form of the error, arises and repeats its overthrow.

These remarks are peculiarly applicable to Locke's Essay. His doctrines were new, and had to make their way: he therefore wrote not for learners, but for the learned; for men who were trained in the systems antecedent to his—in those of the Schoolmen or of the Cartesians. He said what he thought necessary to establish his own opinions, and answered the objections of such objectors as the age afforded; but he could not anticipate all the objections which might be made by a subsequent age: least of all could he anticipate those which would be made now, when his philosophy has long been the prevalent one; when the arguments of objectors have been rendered as far as possible consistent with his principles, and are often such as could not have been thought of until he had cleared the ground by demolishing some received opinion, which no one before him had thought of disputing.*

* As an example, and one which is in point to Mr. Sedgwick's attack, let us take Locke's refutation of innate ideas. The doctrine maintained in his time, and against which his arguments are directed, was, that there are ideas which exist in the mind antecedently to experience. Of this theory his refutation is complete, and the error has never again reared its head. But a form of the same doctrine has since arisen, somewhat different from the above, and which could not have been thought of until Locke had established the dependence of all our knowledge upon experience. In this modern theory, it is admitted that experience, or, in other words, impressions received from without, must *precede* the excitement of any ideas in the mind; no ideas, therefore, exist in the mind *antecedently* to experience; but there are some ideas (so the theory contends) which, though experience must precede them, are not *likenesses* of anything which we have experience of, but are only *suggested* or *excited* by it; ideas which are only so far the effects of outward impressions, that they would for ever lie dormant if no outward impressions were ever made. Experience, in short, is a *necessary condition* of those ideas, but not their prototype, or their cause. One of these ideas, they contend, is, the idea of substance or matter; which is no copy of any sensation; neither, on the other hand, should we ever have had this notion, if we had never had sensations; but

To attack Locke, therefore, because other arguments than it was necessary for him to use have become requisite to the support of some of his conclusions, is like reproaching the Evangelists because they did not write Evidences of Christianity. The question is, not what Locke has said, but what would he have said if he had heard all that has since been said against him? Unreasonable, however, as is a criticism on Locke conceived in this spirit, Mr. Sedgwick indulges in another strain of criticism even more unreasonable.

The 'greatest fault,' he says, of Locke's Essay, 'is the contracted view it takes of the capacities of man—allowing him, indeed, the faculty of reflecting, and following out trains of thought according to the rules of abstract reasoning; but depriving him both of his powers of imagination and of his moral sense' (p. 57). Several pages are thereupon employed in celebrating

as soon as any sensation is experienced, we are compelled by a law of our nature to form the idea of an external something (which we call matter), and to refer the sensation to this as its exciting cause. Such, it is likewise contended, are the idea of duty, and the moral judgments and feelings. We do not bring with us into the world any idea of a criminal act: it is only experience which gives us that idea; but the moment we conceive the act, we instantly, by the constitution of our nature, judge it to be wrong, and frame the idea of an obligation to abstain from it.

This form of the doctrine of innate principles, Locke did not anticipate, and has not supplied the means of completely refuting. Mr. Sedgwick accordingly triumphs over him, as having missed his mark by overlooking the 'distinction between innate ideas and innate capacities' (p. 48). If Locke has not adverted to a distinction which probably had never been thought of in his day, others have; and no one who now writes on the subject ever overlooks it. Has Mr. Sedgwick ever read Hartley, or Mill? or even Hume, or Helvetius? Apparently not; he shows no signs of having read any writer on the side of the question which he attacks, except Locke and Paley, whom he insists upon treating as the representatives of all others who adopt any of their conclusions.

'the imaginative powers.' And a metaphysician who 'discards these powers from his system' (which, according to Mr. Sedgwick, Locke does), is accused of 'shutting his eyes to the loftiest qualities of the soul' (p. 49).

Has the Professor so far forgotten the book which he must have read once, and on which he passes judgment with so much authority, as to fancy that it claims to be a treatise on all 'the capacities of man?' Can he write in the manner we have just quoted about Locke's book, with the fact looking him in the face from his own pages, that it is entitled *An Essay on the Human Understanding?* Who besides Mr. Sedgwick would look for a treatise on the imagination under such a title? What place, what concern, could it have had there?

The one object of Locke's speculations was to ascertain the limits of our knowledge; what questions we may hope to solve, what are beyond our reach. This purpose is announced in the Preface, and manifested in every chapter of the book. He declares that he commenced his inquiries because 'in discoursing on a subject very remote from this,' it came into his thoughts that 'before we set ourselves upon inquiries of that nature, it was necessary to examine our own abilities, and see what objects our understandings were, or were not, fitted to deal with.'* The following, from the first chapter of the first book, are a few of the passages in which he describes the scope of his speculations:—

'To inquire into the original, certainty, and extent of human knowledge, together with the grounds and degrees of belief,

* Preface to Locke's Essay.

opinion, and assent.' 'To consider the '*discerning* faculties of man, as they are employed about the objects which they have to do with.' 'To give an account of the ways whereby our understandings come to attain those notions of things we have,' and 'set down' some 'measures of the certainty of our knowledge, or the grounds of those persuasions which are to be found amongst men.' 'To search out the bounds between opinion and knowledge, and examine by what measures, in things whereof we have no certain knowledge, we ought to regulate our assent, and moderate our persuasions.' And 'by this inquiry into the nature of the understanding,' to 'discover the powers thereof, how far they reach, to what things they are in any degree proportionate, and where they fail us;' and thereby to 'prevail with the busy mind of man to be more cautious in meddling with things exceeding its comprehension, to stop when it is at the utmost extent of its tether, and to sit down in a quiet ignorance of those things which, upon examination, are found to be beyond the reach of our capacities.'

And because a philosopher, having placed before himself an undertaking of this magnitude, and of this strictly scientific character, and having his mind full of thoughts which were destined to effect a revolution in the philosophy of the human intellect, does not quit his subject to panegyrize the imagination, he is accused of saying that there is no such thing; or of saying that it is a pernicious thing; or rather (for to this pitch of ingenuity Mr. Sedgwick's criticism reaches) of saying *both* that there is no such thing, and *also* that it is a pernicious thing. He '*deprives* man of his powers of imagination;' he '*discards* these powers from his system;' and at the same time he 'speaks of those powers only to condemn them;' he '*denounces* the exercise of the imagination as a fraud upon the reason.' As well might it be asserted, that

Locke denies that man has a body, or condemns the exercise of the body, because he is not constantly proclaiming what a beautiful and glorious thing the body is. Mr. Sedgwick cannot conceive the state of mind of such a man as Locke, who is too entirely absorbed in his subject to be able to turn aside from it every time that an opportunity offers for a flight of rhetoric. With the imagination in its own province, as a source of enjoyment, and a means of educating the feelings, Locke had nothing to do; nor was the subject suited to the character of his mind. He was concerned with Imagination, only in the province of pure intellect; and all he had to do with it there, was to warn it off the ground. This Mr. Sedgwick calls 'denouncing the exercise of the imagination as a fraud upon the reason,' and 'regarding men who appeal to the powers of imagination in their proofs and mingle them in their exhortations as no better than downright cheats' (p. 50). Locke certainly says that imagination is not proof. Does the Professor then mean—and by his rhapsody about the imagination does he intend us to understand—that imagination *is* proof? But how can we expect clearness of ideas on metaphysical subjects, from a writer who cannot discriminate between the Understanding and the Will? Locke's Essay is on the Understanding; Mr. Sedgwick tells us, with much finery of language, that the imagination is a powerful engine for acting on the will. So is a cat-o'-nine-tails. Is a cat-o'-nine-tails, therefore, one of the sources of human knowledge? 'In trying circumstances,' says the Professor, 'the determination of the will is often more by feeling than by reason' (p. 51). In all circumstances,

trying or otherwise, the determination of the will is wholly by feeling. Reason is not an end in itself: it teaches us to know the right ends, and the way to them; but if we desire those ends, this desire is not Reason, but a feeling. Hence the importance of the question, how to give to the imagination that direction which will exercise the most beneficial influence upon the feelings. But the Professor probably meant that 'in trying circumstances, the determination' not 'of the will,' but of the understanding, 'is often more by feeling than by reason.' Unhappily it is; this is the tendency in human nature, against which Locke warns his readers; and by so warning them, incurs the censure of Mr. Sedgwick.*

The other accusation which the Professor urges against Locke—that of overlooking 'the faculties of moral judgment,' and 'depriving' man of his 'moral sense'—will best be considered along with his strictures on Paley's Moral Philosophy; for against Paley, also, the principal charge is that he denies the moral sense.

It is a fact in human nature, that we have moral judgments and moral feelings. We judge certain actions and dispositions to be right, others wrong:

* The word Imagination is currently taken in such a variety of senses, that there is some difficulty in making use of it at all without risk of being misunderstood. In one of its acceptations, Imagination is not the auxiliary merely, but the necessary instrument of Reason—namely, by summoning and keeping before the mind a lively and complete *image* of the thing to be reasoned about. The differences which exist among human beings in their capacity of doing this, and the influence which those differences exercise over the soundness and comprehensiveness of their thinking faculties, are topics well worthy of an elaborate discussion. But of this mode of viewing the subject there are no traces in Mr. Sedgwick's Discourse.

this we call approving and disapproving them. We have also feelings of pleasure in the contemplation of the former class of actions and dispositions—feelings of dislike and aversion to the latter; which feelings, as everybody must be conscious, do not exactly resemble any other of our feelings of pain or pleasure.

Such are the phenomena. Concerning their reality there is no dispute. But there are two theories respecting the origin of these phenomena, which have divided philosophers from the earliest ages of philosophy. One is, that the distinction between right and wrong is an ultimate and inexplicable fact; that we perceive this distinction, as we perceive the distinction of colours, by a peculiar faculty; and that the pleasures and pains, the desires and aversions, consequent upon this perception, are all ultimate facts in our nature; as much so as the pleasures and pains, or the desires and aversions, of which sweet or bitter tastes, pleasing or grating sounds, are the object. This is called the theory of the moral sense—or of moral instincts—or of eternal and immutable morality—or of intuitive principles of morality—or by many other names; to the differences between which, those who adopt the theory often attach great importance, but which, for our present purpose, may all be considered as equivalent.

The other theory is, that the ideas of right and wrong, and the feelings which attach themselves to those ideas, are not ultimate facts, but may be explained and accounted for; are not the result of any peculiar law of our nature, but of the same laws on which all our other complex ideas and feelings depend: that the

distinction between moral and immoral acts is not a peculiar and inscrutable property in the acts themselves, which we perceive by a sense, as we perceive colours by our sense of sight; but flows from the ordinary properties of those actions, for the recognition of which we need no other faculty than our intellects and our bodily senses. And the particular property in actions, which constitutes them moral or immoral, in the opinion of those who hold this theory (all of them, at least, who need here be noticed), is the influence of those actions, and of the dispositions from which they emanate, upon human happiness.

This theory is sometimes called the theory of Utility; and is what Mr. Sedgwick means by 'the utilitarian theory of morals.'

Maintaining this second theory, Mr. Sedgwick calls 'denying the existence of moral feelings' (p. 32). This is, in the first place, misstating the question. Nobody denies the existence of moral feelings. The feelings exist, manifestly exist, and cannot be denied. The questions on which there is a difference are—first, whether they are simple or complex feelings, and if complex, of what elementary feelings they are composed: which is a question of metaphysics; and secondly, what kind of acts and dispositions are the proper objects of those feelings; in other words, what is the principle of morals. These questions, and more peculiarly the last, the theory which has been termed utilitarian professes to solve.

Paley adopted this theory. Mr. Sedgwick, who professes the other theory, treats Paley, and all who take Paley's side of the question, with extreme contumely.

We shall show that Mr. Sedgwick has no right to represent Paley as a type of the theory of utility; that he has failed in refuting even Paley; and that the tone of high moral reprobation which he has assumed towards all who adopt that theory is altogether unmerited on their part, and on his, from his extreme ignorance of the subject, peculiarly unbecoming.

Those who maintain that human happiness is the end and test of morality are bound to prove that the principle is true; but not that Paley understood it. No one is entitled to found an argument against a principle, upon the faults or blunders of a particular writer who professed to build his system upon it, without taking notice that the principle may be understood differently, and has in fact been understood differently by other writers. What would be thought of an assailant of Christianity, who should judge of its truth or beneficial tendency from the views taken of it by the Jesuits, or by the Shakers? A doctrine is not judged at all until it is judged in its best form. The principle of utility may be viewed in as many different lights as every other rule or principle may. If it be liable to mischievous misinterpretations, this is true of all very general, and therefore of all first, principles. Whether the ethical creed of a follower of utility will lead him to moral or immoral consequences, depends on what he thinks useful;—just as, with a partizan of the opposite doctrine—that of innate conscience—it depends on what he thinks his conscience enjoins. But either the one theory or the other must be true. Instead, therefore, of cavilling about the abuses and perversions of either,

real manliness would consist in accepting the true, with all its liabilities to abuse and perversion; and then bending the whole force of our intellects to the establishment of such secondary and intermediate maxims, as may be guides to the *bonâ fide* inquirer in the application of the principle, and salutary checks to the sophist and the dishonest casuist.

There are faults in Paley's conception of the philosophy of morals, both in its foundations and in its subsequent stages, which prevent his book from being an example of the conclusions justly deducible from the doctrine of utility, or of the influences of that doctrine, when properly understood, upon the intellect and character.

In the first place, he does not consider utility as itself the source of moral obligation, but as a mere index to the will of God, which he regards as the ultimate groundwork of all morality, and the origin of its binding force. This doctrine (not that utility is an index to the will of God, but that it is an index and nothing else) we consider as highly exceptionable; and having really many of those bad effects on the mind, erroneously ascribed to the principle of utility.

The only view of the connexion between religion and morality which does not annihilate the very idea of the latter, is that which considers the Deity as not making, but recognising and sanctioning, moral obligation. In the minds of most English thinkers down to the middle of the last century, the idea of duty, and that of obedience to God, were so indissolubly united, as to be inseparable even in thought; and when we consider how in those days religious motives and ideas stood in the front of all speculations, it is

not wonderful that religion should have been thought to constitute the essence of all obligations to which it annexed its sanction. To have inquired, Why am I bound to obey God's will? would, to a Christian of that age, have appeared irreverent. It is a question, however, which, as much as any other, requires an answer from a Christian philosopher. 'Because he is my Maker' is no answer. Why should I obey my Maker? From gratitude? Then gratitude is in itself obligatory, independently of my Maker's will. From reverence and love? But why is he a proper object of love and reverence? Not because he is my Maker. If I had been made by an evil spirit, for evil purposes, my love and reverence (supposing me to be capable of such feelings) would have been due, not to the evil, but to the good Being. Is it because he is just, righteous, merciful? Then these attributes are in themselves good, independently of his pleasure. If any person has the misfortune to believe that his Creator commands wickedness, more respect is due to him for disobeying such imaginary commands, than for obeying them. If virtue would not be virtue unless the Creator commanded it—if it derive all its obligatory force from his will—there remains no ground for obeying him except his power; no motive for morality except the selfish one of the hope of heaven, or the selfish and slavish one of the fear of hell.

Accordingly, in strict consistency with this view of the nature of morality, Paley not only represents the proposition that we ought to do good and not harm to mankind, as a mere corollary from the proposition that God wills their good, and not their harm—but

represents the motive to virtue, and the motive which constitutes it virtue, as consisting solely in the hope of heaven and the fear of hell.

It does not, however, follow that Paley believed mankind to have no feelings except selfish ones. He doubtless would have admitted that they are acted upon by other motives, or, in the language of Bentham and Helvetius, that they have other interests, than merely self-regarding ones. But he chose to say that actions done from those other motives are not virtuous. The happiness of mankind, according to him, was the end for which morality was enjoined; yet he would not admit anything to be morality, when the happiness of mankind, or of any of mankind except ourselves, is the inducement of it. He annexed an arbitrary meaning to the word virtue. How he came to think this arbitrary meaning the right one may be a question. Partly, perhaps, by the habit of thinking and talking of morality under the metaphor of a *law*. In the notion of a law, the idea of the command of a superior, enforced by penalties, is of course the main element.

If Paley's ethical system is thus unsound in its foundations, the spirit which runs through the details is no less exceptionable. It is, indeed, such as to prove, that neither the character nor the objects of the writer were those of a philosopher. There is none of the single-minded earnestness for truth, whatever it may be—the intrepid defiance of prejudice, the firm resolve to look all consequences in the face, which the word philosopher supposes, and without which nothing worthy of note was ever accomplished in moral or political philosophy. One sees throughout

that he has a particular set of conclusions to come to, and will not, perhaps cannot, allow himself to let in any premises which would interfere with them. His book is one of a class which has since become very numerous, and is likely to become still more so —an apology for commonplace. Not to lay a solid foundation, and erect an edifice over it suited to the professed ends; but to construct pillars, and insert them under the existing structure, was Paley's object. He took the doctrines of practical morals which he found current. Mankind were, about that time, ceasing to consider mere use and wont, or even the ordinary special pleading from texts of scripture, as sufficient warrants for these common opinions, and were demanding something like a philosophic basis for them. This philosophic basis, Paley, consciously or unconsciously, made it his endeavour to supply. The skill with which his book was adapted to satisfy this want of the time, accounts for the popularity which attended it, notwithstanding the absence of that generous and inspiring tone, which gives so much of their usefulness as well as of their charm to the writings of Plato, and Locke, and Fenelon, and which mankind are accustomed to pretend to admire, whether they really respond to it or not.

When an author starts with such an object, it is of little consequence what premises he sets out from. In adopting the principle of utility, Paley, we have no doubt, followed the convictions of his intellect; but if he had started from any other principle, we have as little doubt that he would have arrived at the very same conclusions. These conclusions, namely,

the received maxims of his time, were (it would have been strange if they were not) accordant in many points with those which philosophy would have dictated. But had they been accordant on all points, that was not the way in which a philosopher would have dealt with them.

The only deviation from commonplace which has ever been made an accusation (for all departures from commonplace are made accusations) against Paley's moral system, is that of too readily allowing exceptions to important rules; and this Mr. Sedgwick does not fail to lay hold of, and endeavour, as others have done before him, to fix it upon the principle of utility as an immoral consequence. It is, however, imputable to the very same cause which we have already pointed out. Along with the prevailing maxims, Paley borrowed the prevailing laxity in their application. He had not only to maintain existing doctrines, but to save the credit of existing practices also. He found in his country's morality (especially its political morality), modes of conduct universally prevalent, and applauded by all persons of station and consideration, but which, being acknowledged violations of great moral principles, could only be defended as cases of exception, resting on special grounds of expediency; and the only expediency which it was possible to ascribe to them was political expediency—that is, conduciveness to the interests of the ruling powers. To this, and not to the tendencies of the principle of utility, is to be ascribed the lax morality taught by Paley, and justly objected to by Mr. Sedgwick, on the subject of lies, of subscriptions to articles, of the abuses of influence in the British constitution,

and various other topics. The principle of utility leads to no such conclusions. Let us be permitted to add that, if it did, we should not of late years have heard so much in reprobation of it from all manner of persons, and from none more than from the sworn defenders of those very malpractices.

When an inquirer knows beforehand the conclusions which he is to come to, he is not likely to seek far for grounds to rest them upon. Accordingly, the considerations of expediency upon which Paley founds his moral rules, are almost all of the most obvious and vulgar kind. In estimating the consequences of actions, in order to obtain a measure of their morality, there are always two sets of considerations involved: the consequences to the outward interests of the parties concerned (including the agent himself); and the consequences to the characters of the same persons, and to their outward interests so far as dependent on their characters. In the estimation of the first of these two classes of considerations, there is in general not much difficulty, nor much room for difference of opinion. The actions which are directly hurtful, or directly useful, to the outward interests of oneself or of other people, are easily distinguished, sufficiently at least for the guidance of a private individual. The rights of individuals, which other individuals ought to respect, over external things, are in general sufficiently pointed out by a few plain rules, and by the laws of one's country. But it often happens that an essential part of the morality or immorality of an action or a rule of action consists in its influence upon the agent's own mind: upon his susceptibilities of pleasure or pain, upon the general direction

of his thoughts, feelings, and imagination, or upon some particular association. Many actions, moreover, produce effects upon the character of other persons besides the agent. In all these cases there will naturally be as much difference in the moral judgments of different persons, as there is in their views of human nature, and of the formation of character. Clear and comprehensive views of education and human culture must therefore precede, and form the basis of, a philosophy of morals; nor can the latter subject ever be understood, but in proportion as the former is so. For this, much yet remains to be done. Even the materials, though abundant, are not complete. Of those which exist, a large proportion have never yet found their way into the writings of philosophers; but are to be gathered, on the one hand, from actual observers of mankind; on the other, from those autobiographers, and from those poets or novelists, who have spoken out unreservedly, from their own experience, any true human feeling. To collect together these materials, and to add to them, will be a labour for successive generations. But Paley, instead of having brought from the philosophy of education and character any new light to illuminate the subject of morals, has not even availed himself of the lights which had already been thrown upon it from that source. He, in fact, had meditated little on this branch of the subject, and had no ideas in relation to it, but the commonest and most superficial.

Thus much we have been induced to say, rather from the importance of the subject, than for the sake of a just estimate of Paley, which is a matter of inferior consequence; still less for the sake of repelling

Mr. Sedgwick's onslaught, which, as we shall soon see, might have been more summarily disposed of.

Mr. Sedgwick's objections to the principle of utility are of two kinds—first, that it is not true; secondly, that it is dangerous, degrading, and so forth. What he says against its truth, when picked out from a hundred different places, and brought together, would fill about three pages, leaving about twenty consisting of attacks upon its tendency. This already looks ill; for, after all, the truth or falsehood of the principle is the main point. When, of a dissertation on any controverted question, a small part only is employed in proving the author's own opinion, a large part in ascribing odious consequences to the opposite opinion, we are apt to think either that, on the former point, there was not very much to be said; or, if there was, that the author is not very well qualified to say it. One thing is certain; that if an opinion have ever such mischievous consequences, that cannot prevent any thinking person from believing it, if the evidence is in its favour. Unthinking persons, indeed, if they are very solemnly assured that an opinion has mischievous consequences, may be frightened from examining the evidence. When, therefore, we find that this mode of dealing with an opinion is the favourite one—is resorted to in preference to the other, and with greater vehemence, and at greater length—we conclude that it is upon unthinking rather than upon thinking persons that the author calculates upon making an impression; or else, that he himself is one of the former class of persons—that his own judgment is determined, less by evidence presented to his un-

derstanding, than by the repugnancy of the opposite opinion to his partialities and affections; and that, perceiving clearly the opinion to be one which it would be painful to him to adopt, he has been easily satisfied with reasons for rejecting it.

All that the Professor says to disprove the principle of utility, and to prove the existence of a moral sense, is found in the following paragraph:—

'Let it not be said that our moral sentiments are superinduced by seeing and tracing the consequences of crime. The assertion is not true. The early sense of shame comes before such trains of thought, and is not, therefore, caused by them; and millions, in all ages of the world, have grown up as social beings and moral agents, amenable to the laws of God and man, who never traced or thought of tracing the consequences of their actions, nor ever referred them to any standard of utility. Nor let it be said that the moral sense comes of mere teaching—that right and wrong pass as mere words, first from the lips of the mother to the child, and then from man to man; and that we grow up with moral judgments gradually ingrafted in us from without, by the long-heard lessons of praise and blame, by the experience of fitness, or the sanction of the law. I repeat that the statement is not true—that our moral perceptions show themselves not in any such order as this. The question is one of feeling; and the moral feelings are often strongest in very early life, before moral rules or legal sanctions have once been thought of. Again, what are we to understand by teaching? Teaching implies capacity: one can be of no use without the other. A faculty of the soul may be called forth, brought to light, and matured; but cannot be created, any more than we can create a new particle of matter, or invent a new law of nature.'—pp. 52, 53.

The substance of the last three sentences is repeated at somewhat greater length shortly after (pp. 54, 55),

in a passage from which we need only quote the following words:—'No training (however greatly it may change an individual mind) can create a new faculty, any more than it can give a new organ of sense.' In many other parts of the Discourse, the same arguments are alluded to, but no new ones are introduced.

Let us, then, examine these arguments.

First, the Professor says, or seems to say, that our moral sentiments cannot be generated by experience of consequences, because a child feels the sense of shame before he has any experience of consequences; and likewise because millions of persons grow up, have moral feelings, and live morally, 'who never traced, or thought of tracing, the consequences of their actions,' but who yet, it seems, are suffered to go at large, which we thought was not usually the case with persons who never think of the consequences of their actions. The Professor continues—'who never traced, or thought of tracing, the consequences of their actions, nor ever referred them to any standard of utility.'

Secondly; that our moral feelings cannot arise from teaching, because those feelings are often strongest in very early life.

Thirdly; that our moral feelings cannot arise from teaching, because teaching can only call forth a faculty, but cannot create one.

Let us first consider the singular allegation, that the sense of shame in a child precedes all experience of the consequences of actions. Is it not astounding that such an assertion should be ventured upon by any person of sane mind? At what period in a child's life, after it is capable of forming the idea of

an action at all, can it be without experience of the consequences of actions? As soon as it has the idea of one person striking another, is it not aware that striking produces pain? As soon as it has the idea of being commanded by its parent, has it not the notion that, by not doing what is commanded, it will excite the parent's displeasure? A child's knowledge of the simple fact (one of the earliest he becomes acquainted with), that some acts produce pain and others pleasure, is called by pompous names, 'seeing and tracing the consequences of crime,' 'trains of thought,' 'referring actions to a standard,' terms which imply continued reflection and large abstractions; and because these terms are absurd when used of a child or an uneducated person, we are to conclude that a child or an uneducated person has no notion that one thing is caused by another. As well might it be said that a child requires an instinct to tell him that he has ten fingers, because he knows it before he has ever thought of 'making arithmetical computations.' Though a child is not a jurist or a moral philosopher (to whom alone the Professor's phrases would be properly applicable), he has the idea of himself hurting or offending some one, or of some one hurting or annoying him. These are ideas which precede any sense of shame in doing wrong; and it is out of these elements, and not out of abstractions, that the supporters of the theory of utility contend that the idea of wrong, and our feelings of disapprobation of it, are originally formed. Mr. Sedgwick's argument resembles one we often hear, that the principle of utility must be false, because it supposes morality to be founded on the good of society, an idea too com-

plex for the majority of mankind, who look only to the particular persons concerned. Why, none but those who mingle in public transactions, or whose example is likely to have extensive influence, have any occasion to look beyond the particular persons concerned. Morality, for all other people, consists in doing good and refraining from harm, to themselves and to those who immediately surround them. As soon as a child has the idea of voluntarily producing pleasure or pain to any one person, he has an accurate notion of utility. When he afterwards gradually rises to the very complex idea of 'society;' and learns in what manner his actions may affect the interests of other persons than those who are present to his sight, his conceptions of utility, and of right and wrong founded on utility, undergo a corresponding enlargement, but receive no new element.

Again, if it were ever so true that the sense of shame in a child precedes all knowledge of consequences, what is that to the question respecting a moral sense? Is the sense of shame the same thing with a moral sense? A child is ashamed of doing what he is told is wrong; but so is he also ashamed of doing what he knows is right, if he expects to be laughed at for doing it; he is ashamed of being duller than another child, of being ugly, of being poor, of not having fine clothes, of not being able to run, or wrestle, or box so well as another. He is ashamed of whatever causes him to be thought less of by the persons who surround him. This feeling of shame is accounted for by obvious associations; but suppose it to be innate, what would that prove in favour of a moral sense? If all that Mr. Sedgwick can show for

a moral sense is the sense of shame, it might well be supposed that all our moral sentiments are the result of opinions which come to us from without; since the sense of shame so obviously follows the opinion of others, and, at least in early years, is wholly determined by it.

On the Professor's first argument no more needs here be said. His second is the following: that moral feelings cannot 'come of mere teaching,' because they do not grow up gradually, but are often strongest in very early life.

Now, this is, in the first place, a mistaking of the matter in dispute. The Professor is not arguing with Mandeville, or with the rhetoricians in Plato. Nobody, with whom he is concerned, says that moral feelings 'come of mere teaching.' It is not pretended that they are factitious and artificial associations, inculcated by parents and teachers purposely to further certain social ends, and no more congenial to our natural feelings than the contrary associations. The idea of the pain of another is naturally painful; the idea of the pleasure of another is naturally pleasurable. From this fact in our natural constitution, all our affections both of love and aversion towards human beings, in so far as they are different from those we entertain towards mere inanimate objects which are pleasant or disagreeable to us, are held, by the best teachers of the theory of utility, to originate. In this, the unselfish part of our nature, lies a foundation, even independently of inculcation from without, for the generation of moral feelings.

But if, because it is not inconsistent with the constitution of our nature that moral feelings should

grow up independently of teaching, Mr. Sedgwick would infer that they generally do so, or that teaching is not the source of almost all the moral feeling which exists in the world, his assertion is a piece of sentimentality completely at variance with the facts. If by saying that 'moral feelings are often strongest in very early life,' Mr. Sedgwick means that they are strongest in children, he only proves his ignorance of children. Young children have affections, but not moral feelings; and children whose will is never resisted, never acquire them. There is no selfishness equal to that of children, as every one who is acquainted with children well knows: It is not the hard, cold selfishness of a grown person, for the most affectionate children have it where their affection is not supplying a counter-impulse; but the most selfish of grown persons does not come up to a child in the reckless seizing of any pleasure to himself, regardless of the consequences to others. The pains of others, though naturally painful to us, are not so until we have realized them by an act of imagination, implying voluntary attention; and that no very young child ever pays, while under the impulse of a present desire. If a child restrains the indulgence of any wish, it is either from affection or sympathy, which are quite other feelings than those of morality; or else (whatever Mr. Sedgwick may think) because he has been *taught* to do so. And he only learns the habit gradually, and in proportion to the assiduity and skill of the teaching.

The assertion that 'moral feelings are often strongest in very early life,' is true in no sense but one, which confirms what it is brought to refute.

The time of life at which moral feelings are apt to be strongest, is the age when we cease to be merely members of our own families, and begin to have intercourse with the world; that is, when the teaching has continued longest in one direction, and has not commenced in any other direction. When we go forth into the world, and meet with teaching, both by precept and example, of an opposite tendency to that which we have been used to, the feeling begins to weaken. Is this a sign of its being wholly independent of teaching? Has a boy, quietly educated in a well-regulated home, or one who has been at a public school, the strongest moral feelings?

Enough has probably been said on the Professor's second argument. His third is, that teaching may strengthen our natural faculties, and call forth those which are powerless because untried; but cannot create a faculty which does not exist; cannot, therefore, have created the moral faculty.

It is surprising that Mr. Sedgwick should not see that his argument begs the question in dispute. To prove that our moral judgments are innate, he assumes that they proceed from a distinct faculty. But this is precisely what the adherents of the principle of utility deny. They contend that the morality of actions is perceived by the same faculties by which we perceive any other of the qualities of actions, namely, our intellects and our senses. They hold the capacity of perceiving moral distinctions to be no more a distinct faculty than the capacity of trying causes, or of making a speech to a jury. This last is a very peculiar power, yet no one says that it must have pre-existed in Sir James Scarlett before he

was called to the bar, because teaching and practice cannot create a new faculty. They can create a new power; and a faculty is but a finer name for a power. Mr. Sedgwick loses sight of the very meaning of the word faculty—*facultas*. He talks of a faculty 'powerless because untried.' A power powerless!*

The only colour for representing our moral judgments as the result of a peculiar part of our nature, is that our feelings of moral approbation and disapprobation are really peculiar feelings. But is it not notorious that peculiar feelings, unlike any others which we have experience of, are created by association every day? What does the Professor think of the feelings of ambition; the desire of power over our fellow-creatures, and the pleasure of its possession and exercise? These are peculiar feelings. But they are obviously generated by the law of association, from the connexion between power over our fellow-creatures, and the gratification of almost all our other inclinations. What will the Professor say of the chivalrous point of honour? What of the feelings of envy and jealousy? What of the feelings of the miser to his gold? Who ever looked upon these last as the subject of a distinct natural faculty? Their origin in association is obvious to all the world. Yet they are feelings as peculiar, as unlike any other part of our nature, as the feelings of conscience.

It will hardly be believed that what we have now answered is all that Mr. Sedgwick advances, to prove

* We cannot help referring the Professor back to Locke, and to that very chapter 'On Power' which he singles out for peculiar objurgation. We recommend to his special attention the admirable remarks in that chapter on the abuse of the word 'faculty.'

the principle of utility untrue; yet such is the fact. Let us now see whether he is more successful in proving the pernicious consequences of the principle, and the 'degrading effect' which it produces 'on the temper and conduct of those who adopt it.'

The Professor's talk is more indefinite, and the few ideas he has are more overlaid with declamatory phrases, on this point, than even on the preceding one. We can, however, descry through the mist some faint semblance of two tangible objections: one, that the principle of utility is not suited to man's capacity—that if we were ever so desirous of applying it correctly, we should not be capable; the other, that it debases the moral practice of those who adopt it—which seems to imply (strange as the assertion is) that the adoption of it as a principle is not consistent with an attempt to apply it correctly.

We must quote Mr. Sedgwick's very words, or it would hardly be believed that we quote him fairly:—

'Independently of the bad effects produced on the moral character of man, by a system which makes expediency (in whatever sense the word be used) the test of right and wrong, we may affirm, on a more general view, that the rule itself is utterly unfitted to his capacity. Feeble as man may be, he forms a link in a chain of moral causes, ascending to the throne of God; and trifling as his individual acts may seem, he tries in vain to follow out their consequences as they go down into the countless ages of coming time. Viewed in this light, every act of man is woven into a moral system, ascending through the past—descending to the future—and preconceived in the mind of the Almighty. Nor does this notion, as far as regards ourselves, end in mere quietism and necessity. For we know right from wrong, and have that liberty of action which implies responsibility; and, as far as we are

allowed to look into the ways of Providence, it seems compatible with his attributes to use the voluntary acts of created beings, as second causes in working out the ends of his own will. Leaving, however, out of question that stumbling-block which the prescience of God has often thrown in the way of feeble and doubting minds, we are, at least, certain, that man has not foreknowledge to trace the consequences of a single action of his own; and hence that utility (in the highest sense of which the word is capable) is, as a test of right and wrong, unfitted to his understanding, and therefore worthless in its application.'—pp. 63, 64.

Mr. Sedgwick appears to be one of that numerous class who never take the trouble to set before themselves fairly an opinion which they have an aversion to. Who ever said that it was necessary to foresee all the consequences of each individual action, 'as they go down into the countless ages of coming time?' Some of the consequences of an action are accidental; others are its natural result, according to the known laws of the universe. The former, for the most part, cannot be foreseen; but the whole course of human life is founded upon the fact that the latter can. In what reliance do we ply our several trades—in what reliance do we buy or sell, eat or drink, write books or read them, walk, ride, speak, think, except on our foresight of the consequences of those actions? The commonest person lives according to maxims of prudence wholly founded on foresight of consequences; and we are told by a wise man from Cambridge, that the foresight of consequences, as a rule to guide ourselves by, is impossible! Our foresight of consequences is not perfect. Is anything else in our constitution perfect? *Est quodam prodire tenus, si non datur ultra: Non possis oculo quantum contendere*

Lynceus; Non tamen idcirco contemnas lippus inungi. If the Professor quarrels with such means of guiding our conduct as we are gifted with, it is incumbent on him to show that, in point of fact, we have been provided with better. Does the moral sense, allowing its existence, point out any surer practical rules? If so, let us have them in black and white. If nature has given us rules which suffice for our conduct, without any consideration of the probable consequences of our actions, produce them. But no; for two thousand years, nature's moral code has been a topic for declamation, and no one has yet produced a single chapter of it: nothing but a few elementary generalities, which are the mere alphabet of a morality founded upon utility. Hear Bishop Butler, the oracle of the moral sense school, and whom our author quotes:—

'However much men may have disputed about the nature of virtue, and whatever ground for doubt there may be about particulars, yet in general there is an universally acknowledged standard of it. It is that which all ages and all countries have made a profession of in public; it is that which every man you meet puts on the show of; it is that which the primary and fundamental laws of all civil constitutions over the face of the earth make it their business and endeavour to enforce the practice of upon mankind: namely, justice, veracity, and regard to the common good.'—p. 130.

Mr. Sedgwick praises Butler for not being more explanatory.* Did Butler, then, or does Mr. Sedg-

* 'Here everything,' says he, 'remains indefinite: yet all the successive propositions have their meaning. The author knew well that the things he had to deal with were indefinite, and that he could not fetter them in the language of a formal definition, without violating their nature. But how small has been the number of moral writers who have understood the real value of this forbearance!'

wick, seriously believe that mankind have not sufficient foresight of consequences to perceive the advantage of 'justice, veracity, and regard to the common good?' That, without a peculiar faculty, they would not be able to see that these qualities are useful to them?

When, indeed, the question arises, *what is* justice? —that is, what are those claims of others which we are bound to respect? and *what is* the conduct required by 'regard to the common good?' the solutions which we can deduce from our foresight of consequences are not infallible. But let any one try those which he can deduce from the moral sense. Can he deduce any? Show us, written in the human heart, any answer to *these* questions. Bishop Butler gives up the point; and Mr. Sedgwick praises him for doing so. When Mr. Sedgwick wants something definite, to oppose to the indefiniteness of a morality founded on utility, he has recourse not to the moral sense, but to Christianity. With such fairness as this does he hold the balance between the two principles: he supposes his moral-sense man provided with all the guidance which can be derived from a revelation from heaven, and his utilitarian destitute of any such help. When one sees the question so stated, one cannot wonder at any conclusion. Need we say that Revelation, as a means of supplying the uncertainty of human judgment, is as open to one of the two parties as to the other? Need we say that Paley, the very author who, in this Discourse, is treated as the representative of the utilitarian system, appeals to Revelation throughout? and obtains no credit from Mr. Sedgwick for it, but the contrary; for Revelation, it

seems, may be referred to in aid of the moral sense, but not to assist or rectify our judgments of utility.

The truth, however, is, that Revelation (if by Revelation be meant the New Testament), as Paley justly observed, enters little into the details of ethics. Christianity does not deliver a code of morals, any more than a code of laws. Its practical morality is altogether indefinite, and was meant to be so. This indefiniteness has been considered by some of the ablest defenders of Christianity as one of its most signal merits, and among the strongest proofs of its divine origin: being the quality which fits it to be an universal religion, and distinguishes it both from the Jewish dispensation, and from all other religions, which as they invariably enjoin, under their most awful sanctions, acts which are only locally or temporarily useful, are in their own nature local and temporary. Christianity, on the contrary, influences the conduct by shaping the character itself: it aims at so elevating and purifying the desires, that there shall be no hindrance to the fulfilment of our duties when recognised; but of what our duties are, at least in regard to outward acts, it says very little but what moralists in general have said. If, therefore, we would have any definite morality at all, we must perforce resort to that 'foresight of consequences,' of the difficulties of which the Professor has so formidable an idea.

But this talk about uncertainty is mere exaggeration. There would be great uncertainty if each individual had all to do for himself, and only his own experience to guide him. But we are not so situated. Every one directs himself in morality, as in all his conduct,

not by his own unaided foresight, but by the accumulated wisdom of all former ages, embodied in traditional aphorisms. So strong is the disposition to submit to the authority of such traditions, and so little danger is there, in most conditions of mankind, of erring on the other side, that the absurdest customs are perpetuated through a lapse of ages from no other cause. A hundred millions of human beings think it the most exalted virtue to swing by a hook before an idol, and the most dreadful pollution to drink cow-broth—only because their forefathers thought so. A Turk thinks it the height of indecency for women to be seen in the streets unveiled; and when he is told that in some countries this happens without any evil result, he shakes his head and says, 'If you hold butter to the fire it will melt.' Did not many generations of the most educated men in Europe believe every line of Aristotle to be infallible? So difficult is it to break loose from a received opinion. The progress of experience, and the growth of the human intellect, succeed but too slowly in correcting and improving traditional opinions. There is little fear, truly, that the mass of mankind should insist upon 'tracing the consequences of actions' by their own unaided lights;—they are but too ready to let it be done for them once for all, and to think they have nothing to do with rules of morality (as Tory writers say they have with the laws) but to obey them.

Mr. Sedgwick is master of the stock phrases of those who know nothing of the principle of utility but the name. To act upon rules of conduct, of which utility is recognised as the basis, he calls

'waiting for the calculations of utility'—a thing, according to him, in itself immoral, since 'to hesitate is to rebel.' On the same principle, navigating by rule instead of by instinct, might be called waiting for the calculations of astronomy. There seems no absolute necessity for putting off the calculations until the ship is in the middle of the South Sea. Because a sailor has not verified all the computations in the Nautical Almanac, does he therefore 'hesitate' to use it?

Thus far Mr. Sedgwick on the difficulties of the principle of utility, when we mean to apply it honestly. But he further charges the principle with having a 'debasing' and 'degrading' effect.

A word like 'debasing,' applied to anything which acts upon the mind, may mean several things. It may mean, making us unprincipled; regardless of the rights and feelings of other people. It may mean, making us slavish; spiritless, submissive to injury or insult; incapable of asserting our own rights, and vindicating the just independence of our minds and actions. It may mean, making us cowardly; slothful; incapable of bearing pain, or nerving ourselves to exertion for a worthy object. It may mean, making us narrow-minded; pusillanimous, in Hobbes's sense of the word: too intent upon little things to feel rightly about great ones: incapable of having our imagination fired by a grand object of contemplation; incapable of thinking, feeling, aspiring, or acting, on any but a small scale. An opinion which produced any of these effects upon the mind would be rightly called debasing. But when, without proving, or even in plain terms asserting, that it produces

these effects, or any effects which he can make distinctly understood, a man merely says of an opinion that it is debasing,—all he really says is, that he has a feeling, which he cannot exactly describe, but upon which he values himself, and to which the opinion is in some way or other offensive. What definite proposition concerning the effect of any doctrine on the mind can be extracted from such a passage as this?—

'If expediency be the measure of right, and every one claim the liberty of judgment, virtue and vice have no longer any fixed relations to the moral condition of man, but change with the fluctuations of opinion. Not only are his actions tainted by prejudice and passion, but his rule of life, under this system, must be tainted in like degree—must be brought down to its own level: for he will no longer be able, compatibly with his principles, to separate the rule from its application. No high and unvarying standard of morality, which his heart approves, however infirm his practice, will be offered to his thoughts. But his bad passions will continue to do their work in bending him to the earth; and unless he be held upright by the strong power of religion (an extrinsic power which I am not now considering), he will inevitably be carried down, by a degrading standard of action, to a sordid and grovelling life. It may perhaps be said, that we are arguing against a rule, only from its misapprehension and abuse. But we reply, that every precept is practically bad when its abuse is natural and inevitable—that the system of utility brings down virtue from a heavenly throne, and places her on an earthly tribunal, where her decisions, no longer supported by any holy sanction, are distorted by judicial ignorance, and tainted by base passion.'—p. 63.

What does this tell us? First, that if utility be the standard, different persons may have different opinions on morality. This is the talk about uncer-

tainty, which has been already disposed of. Next, that where there is uncertainty, men's passions will bias their judgment. Granted; this is one of the evils of our condition, and must be borne with. We do not diminish it by pretending that nature tells us what is right, when nobody ever ventures to set down what nature tells us, nor affects to expound her laws in any way but by an appeal to utility. All that the remainder of the passage does, is to repeat, in various phrases, that Mr. Sedgwick feels such a 'standard of action' to be 'degrading;' that Mr. Sedgwick feels it to be 'sordid' and 'grovelling.' If so, nobody can compel Mr. Sedgwick to adopt it. If he feels it debasing, no doubt it would be so to him. But until he is able to show some reason why it must be so to others, may we be permitted to suggest, that perhaps the cause of its being so to himself, is only that he does not understand it?

Read this:—

'Christianity considers every act grounded on mere worldly consequences as built on a false foundation. The mainspring of every virtue is placed by it in the affections, called into renewed strength by a feeling of self-abasement—by gratitude for an immortal benefit—by communion with God—and by the hopes of everlasting life. Humility is the foundation of the Christian's honour—distrust of self is the ground of his strength—and his religion tells him that every work of man is counted worthless in the sight of heaven, as the means of his pardon or the price of his redemption. Yet it gives him a pure and perfect rule of life; and does not for an instant exempt him from the duty of obedience to his rule: for it ever aims at a purgation of the moral faculties, and a renewal of the defaced image of God; and its moral precepts have an everlasting sanction. And thus does Christian love become

an efficient and abiding principle—not tested by the world, but above the world; yet reaching the life-spring of every virtuous deed, and producing in its season a harvest of good and noble works incomparably more abundant than ever rose from any other soil.

'The utilitarian scheme starts, on the contrary, with an abrogation of the authority of conscience—a rejection of the moral feelings as the test of right and wrong. From first to last, it is in bondage to the world, measuring every act by a worldly standard, and estimating its value by worldly consequences. Virtue becomes a question of calculation—a matter of profit or loss; and if man gain heaven at all on such a system, it must be by arithmetical details—the computation of his daily work—the balance of his moral ledger. A conclusion such as this offends against the spirit breathing in every page of the book of life; yet is it fairly drawn from the principle of utility. It appears, indeed, not only to have been foreseen by Paley, but to have been accepted by him—a striking instance of the tenacity with which man ever clings to system, and is ready to embrace even its monstrous consequences rather than believe that he has himself been building on a wrong foundation.'—pp. 66, 67.

In a note, he adds,—

'The following are the passages here referred to:—

''The Christian religion hath not ascertained *the precise quantity of virtue* necessary to salvation.'

''It has been said, that it can never be a just economy of Providence to admit one part of mankind into heaven, and condemn the other to hell; since there must be very little to choose between the worst man who is received into heaven, and the best who is excluded. And how know we, it might be answered, but that there may be as little to choose in their conditions?'—*Moral Philosophy*, book i. ch. 7.

'In the latter years of his life, Paley would, I believe, have been incapable of uttering or conceiving sentiments such as these.'

So that a 'purgation of the moral faculties' is necessary: the moral feelings require to be corrected. Yet the moral feelings are 'the test of right and wrong;' and whoever 'rejects' them as a test, must be called hard names. But we do not want to convict Mr. Sedgwick of inconsistency; we want to get at his meaning. Have we come to it at last? The gravamen of the charge against the principle of utility seems to lie in a word. Utility is a *worldly* standard; and estimates every act by *worldly* consequences.

Like most persons who are speaking from their feelings only, on a subject on which they have never seriously thought, the Professor is imposed upon by words. He is carried away by an ambiguity. To make his assertion about the *worldliness* of the standard of utility, true, it must be understood in one sense; to make it have the invidious effect which is intended, it must be understood in another. By 'worldly,' does he mean to imply what is commonly meant when the word is used as a reproach—an undue regard to interest in the vulgar sense, our wealth, power, social position, and the like, our command over agreeable outward objects, and over the opinion and good offices of other people? If so, to call utility a worldly standard is to misrepresent the doctrine. It is not true that utility estimates actions by this sort of consequences; it estimates them by all their consequences. If he means that the principle of utility regards only (to use a scholastic distinction) the *objective* consequences of actions, and omits the *subjective*; attends to the effects on our outward condition, and that of other people, too

much—to those on our internal sources of happiness or unhappiness, too little; this criticism is, as we have already remarked, in some degree applicable to Paley; but to charge this blunder upon the principle of utility, would be to say, that if it is your rule to judge of a thing by its consequences, you will judge only by a portion of them. Again, if Mr. Sedgwick meant to speak of a 'worldly standard' in contradistinction to a religious standard, and to say that if we adopt the principle of utility, we cannot admit religion as a sanction for it, or cannot attach importance to religious motives or feelings, the assertion would be simply false, and a gross injustice even to Paley. What, therefore, can Mr. Sedgwick mean? Merely this: that our actions take place in the world; that their consequences are produced in the world; that we have been placed in the world; and that there, if anywhere, we must earn a place in heaven. The morality founded on utility allows this, certainly: does Mr. Sedgwick's system of morality deny it?

Mark the confusion of ideas involved in this sentence: 'Christianity considers every act grounded on mere worldly consequences as built on a false foundation.' What is saving a father from death, but saving him from a worldly consequence? What are healing the sick, clothing the naked, sheltering the houseless, but acts which wholly consist in producing a worldly consequence? Confine Mr. Sedgwick to unambiguous words, and he is already answered. What is really true is, that Christianity considers no act as meritorious which is done from mere worldly *motives;* that is, which is in no degree prompted by the desire of

our own moral perfection, or of the approbation of a perfect being. These motives, we need scarcely observe, may be equally powerful, whatever be our standard of morality, provided we believe that the Deity approves it.

Mr. Sedgwick is scandalized at the supposition that the place awarded to each of us in the next world will depend on the balance of the good and evil of our lives. According to his notions of justice, we presume, it ought to depend wholly upon one of the two. As usual, Mr. Sedgwick begins by a misapprehension; he neither understands Paley, nor the conclusion which, he says, is 'fairly drawn from the principles of utility.' Paley held, with other Christians, that our place hereafter would be determined by our degree of moral perfection; that is, by the balance, not of our good and evil *deeds*, which depend upon opportunity and temptation, but of our good and evil *dispositions;* by the intensity and continuity of our *will* to do good; by the strength with which we have *struggled* to be virtuous; not by our accidental lapses, or by the unintended good or evil which has followed from our actions. When Paley said that Christianity has not ascertained 'the precise quantity of virtue necessary to salvation,' he did not mean the number or kind of beneficial actions; he meant, that Christianity has not decided what positive strength of virtuous inclinations, and what capacity of resisting temptations, will procure acquittal at the tribunal of God. And most wisely is this left undecided. Nor can there be a solution more consistent with the attributes which Christianity ascribes to the Deity, than Paley's own—that every step of advance in

moral perfection, will be something gained towards everlasting welfare.

The remainder of Mr. Sedgwick's argument—if argument it can be called—is a perpetual *ignoratio elenchi*. He lumps up the principle of utility—which is a theory of right and wrong—with the theory, if there be such a theory, of the universal selfishness of mankind. We never know, for many sentences together, which of the two he is arguing against; he never seems to know it himself. He begins a sentence on the one, and ends it on the other. In his mind they seem to be one and the same. Read this:—

'Utilitarian philosophy and Christian ethics have in their principles and motives no common bond of union, and ought never to have been linked together in one system: for, palliate and disguise the difference as we may, we shall find at last that they rest on separate foundations; one deriving all its strength from the moral feelings, and the other from the selfish passions of our nature.'—p. 67.

Or this,—

'If we suppress the authority of conscience, reject the moral feelings, rid ourselves of the sentiments of honour, and sink (as men too often do) below the influence of religion; and if, at the same time, we are taught to think that utility is the universal test of right and wrong; what is there left within us as an antagonist power to the craving of passion, or the base appetite of worldly gain? In such a condition of the soul, all motive not terminating in mere passion becomes utterly devoid of meaning. On this system, the sinner is no longer abhorred as a rebel against his better nature—as one who profanely mutilates the image of God; he acts only on the principles of other men, but he blunders in calculating the chances of his personal advantage: and thus we deprive virtue of its holiness, and vice of its deformity; humanity of

its honour, and language of its meaning; we shut out, as no better than madness or folly, the loftiest sentiments of the heathen as well as of the Christian world; and all that is great or generous in our nature droops under the influence of a cold and withering selfishness.'—pp. 76, 77.

Every line of this passage convicts Mr. Sedgwick of never having taken the trouble to know the meaning of the terms in which the doctrine he so eagerly vilifies is conveyed. What has 'calculating the chances of personal advantage' to do with the principle of utility? The object of Mr. Sedgwick is, to represent that principle as leading to the conclusion, that a vicious man is no more a subject of disapprobation than a person who blunders in a question of prudence. If Mr. Sedgwick did but know what the principle of utility is, he would see that it leads to no such conclusion. Some people have been led to that conclusion, not by the principle of utility, but either by the doctrine of philosophical necessity, incorrectly understood, or by a theory of motives, which has been called the selfish theory; and even from that it does not justly follow.

The finery about shutting out 'lofty sentiments' scarcely deserves notice. It resembles what is said in the next page about 'suppressing all the kindly emotions which minister to virtue.' We are far from charging Mr. Sedgwick with wilful misrepresentation, but this is the very next thing to it—misrepresentation in voluntary ignorance. Who proposes to suppress any 'kindly emotion?' Human beings, the Professor may be assured, will always love and honour every sentiment, whether 'lofty' or otherwise, which is either directly pointed to their good, or tends

to raise the mind above the influence of the petty objects for the sake of which mankind injure one another. The Professor is afraid that the sinner will be 'no longer abhorred.' We imagined that it was not the sinner who should be abhorred, but sin. Mankind, however, are sufficiently ready to abhor whatever is obviously noxious to them. A human being filled with malevolent dispositions, or coldly indifferent to the feelings of his fellow-creatures, will never, the Professor may assure himself, be amiable in their eyes. Whether they will speak of him as 'a rebel against his better nature,'—'one who profanely mutilates the image of God,' and so on, will depend upon whether they are proficients in commonplace rhetoric. But whatever words they use, rely on it, that, while men dread and abhor a wolf or a serpent, which have no better nature, and no image of God to mutilate, they will abhor with infinitely greater intensity a human being who, outwardly resembling themselves, is inwardly their enemy, and, being far more powerful than 'toad or asp,' voluntarily cherishes the same disposition to mischief.

If utility be the standard, 'the end,' in the Professor's opinion, 'will be made to sanctify the means' (p. 78). We answer—just so far as in any other system, and no farther. In every system of morality, the end, when good, justifies all means which do not conflict with some more important good. On Mr. Sedgwick's own scheme, are there not ends which sanctify actions, in other cases deserving the utmost abhorrence—such, for instance, as taking the life of a fellow-creature in cold blood, in the face of the whole people? According to the principle of utility, the

end justifies all means necessary to its attainment, except those which are more mischievous than the end is useful; an exception amply sufficient.

We have now concluded our examination of Mr. Sedgwick: first, as a commentator on the studies which form part of a liberal education; and next, as an assailant of the 'utilitarian theory of morals.' We have shown that, on the former subject, he has omitted almost everything which ought to have been said; that almost all which he has said is trivial, and much of it erroneous. With regard to the other part of his design, we have shown that he has not only failed to refute the doctrine that human happiness is the foundation of morality, but has, in the attempt, proved himself not to understand what the doctrine is; and to be capable of bringing the most serious charges against other men's opinions, and themselves, which even a smattering of the knowledge appropriate to the subject, would have shown to be groundless.

We by no means affect to consider Mr. Sedgwick as (what he would not himself claim to be) a sufficient advocate of the cause he has espoused, nor pretend that his pages contain the best that can be said, or even the best that has been said, against the theory of utility. That theory numbers among its enemies, minds of almost every degree of power and intellectual accomplishments; among whom many are capable of making out a much better apparent case for their opinion. But Mr. Sedgwick's is a fair enough sample of the popular arguments against the theory; his book has had more readers and more applauders than a better book would have had, because

it is level with a lower class of capacities: and though, by pointing out its imperfections, we do little to establish our own opinion, it is something to have shown on how light grounds, in some cases, men of gravity and reputation arraign the opinion, and are admired and applauded for so arraigning it.

The question is not one of pure speculation. Not to mention the importance, to those who are entrusted with the education of the moral sentiments, of just views respecting their origin and nature; we may remark that, upon the truth or falseness of the doctrine of a moral sense, it depends whether morality is a fixed or a progressive body of doctrine. If it be true that man has a sense given him to determine what is right and wrong, it follows that his moral judgments and feelings cannot be susceptible of any improvement; such as they are they ought to remain. The question, what mankind in general ought to think and feel on the subject of their duty, must be determined by observing what, when no interest or passion can be seen to bias them, they think and feel already. According to the theory of utility, on the contrary, the question, what is our duty, is as open to discussion as any other question. Moral doctrines are no more to be received without evidence, nor to be sifted less carefully, than any other doctrines. An appeal lies, as on all other subjects, from a received opinion, however generally entertained, to the decisions of cultivated reason. The weakness of human intellect, and all the other infirmities of our nature, are considered to interfere as much with the rectitude of our judgments on morality, as on any other of our concerns; and changes as great are anticipated in our

opinions on that subject, as on every other, both from the progress of intelligence, from more authentic and enlarged experience, and from alterations in the condition of the human race, requiring altered rules of conduct.

It deeply concerns the greatest interests of our race, that the only mode of treating ethical questions which aims at correcting existing maxims, and rectifying any of the perversions of existing feeling, should not be borne down by clamour. The contemners of analysis have long enough had all the pretension to themselves. They have had the monopoly of the claim to pure, and lofty, and sublime principles; and those who gave reasons to justify their feelings have submitted to be cried down as low, and cold, and degraded. We hope they will submit no longer; and not content with meeting the metaphysics of their more powerful adversaries by profounder metaphysics, will join battle in the field of popular controversy with every antagonist of name and reputation, even when, as in the present case, his name and reputation are his only claims to be heard on such a subject.

CIVILIZATION.

THE word Civilization, like many other terms of the philosophy of human nature, is a word of double meaning. It sometimes stands for *human improvement* in general, and sometimes for *certain kinds* of improvement in particular.

We are accustomed to call a country more civilized if we think it more improved; more eminent in the best characteristics of Man and Society; farther advanced in the road to perfection; happier, nobler, wiser. This is one sense of the word civilization. But in another sense it stands for that kind of improvement only, which distinguishes a wealthy and powerful nation from savages or barbarians. It is in this sense that we may speak of the vices or the miseries of civilization; and that the question has been seriously propounded, whether civilization is on the whole a good or an evil? Assuredly, we entertain no doubt on this point; we hold that civilization is a good, that it is the cause of much good, and not incompatible with any; but we think there is other good, much even of the highest good, which civilization in this sense does not provide for, and some which it has a tendency (though that tendency may be counteracted) to impede.

* *London and Westminster Review*, April 1836.

The inquiry into which these considerations would lead, is calculated to throw light upon many of the characteristic features of our time. The present era is pre-eminently the era of civilization in the narrow sense; whether we consider what has already been achieved, or the rapid advances making towards still greater achievements. We do not regard the age as either equally advanced or equally progressive in many of the other kinds of improvement. In some it appears to us stationary, in some even retrograde. Moreover, the irresistible consequences of a state of advancing civilization; the new position in which that advance has placed, and is every day more and more placing, mankind; the entire inapplicability of old rules to this new position, and the necessity, if we would either realize the benefits of the new state or preserve those of the old, that we should adopt many new rules, and new courses of action; are topics which seem to require a more comprehensive examination than they have usually received.

We shall on the present occasion use the word civilization only in the restricted sense: not that in which it is synonymous with improvement, but that in which it is the direct converse or contrary of rudeness or barbarism. Whatever be the characteristics of what we call savage life, the contrary of these, or the qualities which society puts on as it throws off these, constitute civilization. Thus, a savage tribe consists of a handful of individuals, wandering or thinly scattered over a vast tract of country: a dense population, therefore, dwelling in fixed habitations, and largely collected together in towns and villages,

we term civilized. In savage life there is no commerce, no manufactures, no agriculture, or next to none: a country rich in the fruits of agriculture: commerce, and manufactures, we call civilized. In savage communities each person shifts for himself; except in war (and even then very imperfectly), we seldom see any joint operations carried on by the union of many; nor do savages, in general, find much pleasure in each other's society. Wherever, therefore, we find human beings acting together for common purposes in large bodies, and enjoying the pleasures of social intercourse, we term them civilized. In savage life there is little or no law, or administration of justice; no systematic employment of the collective strength of society, to protect individuals against injury from one another; every one trusts to his own strength or cunning, and where that fails, he is generally without resource. We accordingly call a people civilized, where the arrangements of society, for protecting the persons and property of its members, are sufficiently perfect to maintain peace among them; *i.e.* to induce the bulk of the community to rely for their security mainly upon social arrangements, and renounce for the most part, and in ordinary circumstances, the vindication of their interests (whether in the way of aggression or of defence) by their individual strength or courage.

These ingredients of civilization are various, but consideration will satisfy us that they are not improperly classed together. History, and their own nature, alike show that they begin together, always co-exist, and accompany each other in their growth. Wherever there has arisen sufficient knowledge of the

arts of life, and sufficient security of property and person, to render the progressive increase of wealth and population possible, the community becomes and continues progressive in all the elements which we have just enumerated. These elements exist in modern Europe, and especially in Great Britain, in a more eminent degree, and in a state of more rapid progression, than at any other place or time. We propose to consider some of the consequences which that high and progressive state of civilization has already produced, and of the further ones which it is hastening to produce.

The most remarkable of those consequences of advancing civilization, which the state of the world is now forcing upon the attention of thinking minds, is this: that power passes more and more from individuals, and small knots of individuals, to masses: that the importance of the masses becomes constantly greater, that of individuals less.

The causes, evidences, and consequences of this law of human affairs, well deserve attention.

There are two elements of importance and influence among mankind: the one is, property; the other, powers and acquirements of mind. Both of these, in an early stage of civilization, are confined to a few persons. In the beginnings of society, the power of the masses does not exist; because property and intelligence have no existence beyond a very small portion of the community, and even if they had, those who possessed the smaller portions would be, from their incapacity of co-operation, unable to cope with those who possessed the larger.

In the more backward countries of the present time, and in all Europe at no distant date, we see property entirely concentrated in a small number of hands; the remainder of the people being, with few exceptions, either the military retainers and dependents of the possessors of property, or serfs, stripped and tortured at pleasure by one master, and pillaged by a hundred. At no period could it be said that there was literally no middle class—but that class was extremely feeble, both in numbers and in power: while the labouring people, absorbed in manual toil, with difficulty earned, by the utmost excess of exertion, a more or less scanty and always precarious subsistence. The character of this state of society was the utmost excess of poverty and impotence in the masses; the most enormous importance and uncontrollable power of a small number of individuals, each of whom, within his own sphere, knew neither law nor superior.

We must leave to history to unfold the gradual rise of the trading and manufacturing classes, the gradual emancipation of the agricultural, the tumults and *bouleversements* which accompanied these changes in their course, and the extraordinary alterations in institutions, opinions, habits, and the whole of social life, which they brought in their train. We need only ask the reader to form a conception of all that is implied in the words, growth of a middle class; and then to reflect on the immense increase of the numbers and property of that class throughout Great Britain, France, Germany, and other countries, in every successive generation, and the novelty of a labouring class receiving such wages as are now commonly

earned by nearly the whole of the manufacturing, that is, of the most numerous portion of the operative classes of this country—and ask himself whether, from causes so unheard-of, unheard-of effects ought not to be expected to flow. It must at least be evident, that if, as civilization advances, property and intelligence become thus widely diffused among the millions, it must also be an effect of civilization, that the portion of either of these which can belong to an individual must have a tendency to become less and less influential, and all results must more and more be decided by the movements of masses; provided that the power of combination among the masses keeps pace with the progress of their resources. And that it does so, who can doubt? There is not a more accurate test of the progress of civilization than the progress of the power of co-operation.

Consider the savage: he has bodily strength, he has courage, enterprise, and is often not without intelligence; what makes all savage communities poor and feeble? The same cause which prevented the lions and tigers from long ago extirpating the race of men —incapacity of co-operation. It is only civilized beings who can combine. All combination is compromise: it is the sacrifice of some portion of individual will, for a common purpose. The savage cannot bear to sacrifice, for any purpose, the satisfaction of his individual will. His social cannot even temporarily prevail over his selfish feelings, nor his impulses bend to his calculations. Look again at the slave: he is used indeed to make his will give way; but to the commands of a master, not to a superior purpose of his own. He is wanting in intelligence to

form such a purpose; above all, he cannot frame to himself the conception of a fixed rule: nor if he could, has he the capacity to adhere to it; he is habituated to control, but not to self-control; when a driver is not standing over him with a whip, he is found more incapable of withstanding any temptation, or restraining any inclination, than the savage himself.

We have taken extreme cases, that the fact we seek to illustrate might stand out more conspicuously. But the remark itself applies universally. As any people approach to the condition of savages or of slaves, so are they incapable of acting in concert. Consider even war, the most serious business of a barbarous people; see what a figure rude nations, or semi-civilized and enslaved nations, have made against civilized ones, from Marathon downwards. Why? Because discipline is more powerful than numbers, and discipline, that is, perfect co-operation, is an attribute of civilization. To come to our own times, the whole history of the Peninsular War bears witness to the incapacity of an imperfectly civilized people for co-operation. Amidst all the enthusiasm of the Spanish nation struggling against Napoleon, no one leader, military or political, could act in concert with another; no one would sacrifice one iota of his consequence, his authority, or his opinion, to the most obvious demands of the common cause; neither generals nor soldiers could observe the simplest rules of the military art. If there be an interest which one might expect to act forcibly upon the minds even of savages, it is the desire of simultaneously crushing a formidable neighbour whom none of them are strong enough to resist single-handed; yet none but civilized

nations have ever been capable of forming an alliance. The native states of India have been conquered by the English one by one; Turkey made peace with Russia in the very moment of her invasion by France; the nations of the world never could form a confederacy against the Romans, but were swallowed up in succession, some of them being always ready to aid in the subjugation of the rest. Enterprises requiring the voluntary co-operation of many persons independent of one another, in the hands of all but highly civilized nations, have always failed.

It is not difficult to see why this incapacity of organized combination characterizes savages, and disappears with the growth of civilization. Co-operation, like other difficult things, can be learnt only by practice: and to be capable of it in great things, a people must be gradually trained to it in small. Now, the whole course of advancing civilization is a series of such training. The labourer in a rude state of society works singly, or if several are brought to work together by the will of a master, they work side by side, but not in concert; one man digs his piece of ground, another digs a similar piece of ground close by him. In the situation of an ignorant labourer, tilling even his own field with his own hands, and associating with no one except his wife and his children, what is there that can teach him to co-operate? The division of employments—the accomplishment by the combined labour of several, of tasks which could not be achieved by any number of persons singly—is the great school of co-operation. What a lesson, for instance, is navigation, as soon as it passes out of its first simple stage; the safety of all, con-

stantly depending upon the vigilant performance by each, of the part peculiarly allotted to him in the common task. Military operations, when not wholly undisciplined, are a similar school; so are all the operations of commerce and manufactures which require the employment of many hands upon the same thing at the same time. By these operations, mankind learn the value of combination; they see how much and with what ease it accomplishes, which never could be accomplished without it; they learn a practical lesson of submitting themselves to guidance, and subduing themselves to act as interdependent parts of a complex whole. A people thus progressively trained to combination by the business of their lives, become capable of carrying the same habits into new things. For it holds universally, that the one only mode of learning to do anything, is actually doing something of the same kind under easier circumstances. Habits of discipline once acquired, qualify human beings to accomplish all other things for which discipline is needed. No longer either spurning control, or incapable of seeing its advantages; whenever any object presents itself which can be attained by co-operation, and which they see or believe to be beneficial, they are ripe for attaining it.

The characters, then, of a state of high civilization being the diffusion of property and intelligence, and the power of co-operation; the next thing to observe is the unexampled development which all these elements have assumed of late years.

The rapidity with which property has accumulated and is accumulating in the principal countries of Europe, but especially in this island, is obvious to

every one. The capital of the industrious classes overflows into foreign countries, and into all kinds of wild speculations. The amount of capital annually exported from Great Britain alone, surpasses probably the whole wealth of the most flourishing commercial republics of antiquity. But this capital, collectively so vast, is mainly composed of small portions; very generally so small that the owners cannot, without other means of livelihood, subsist on the profits of them. While such is the growth of property in the hands of the mass, the circumstances of the higher classes have undergone nothing like a corresponding improvement. Many large fortunes have, it is true, been accumulated, but many others have been wholly or partially dissipated; for the inheritors of immense fortunes, as a class, always live at least up to their incomes when at the highest, and the unavoidable vicissitudes of those incomes are always sinking them deeper and deeper into debt. A large proportion of the English landlords, as they themselves are constantly telling us, are so overwhelmed with mortgages, that they have ceased to be the real owners of the bulk of their estates. In other countries the large properties have very generally been broken down; in France, by revolution, and the revolutionary law of inheritance; in Prussia, by successive edicts of that substantially democratic, though formally absolute government.

With respect to knowledge and intelligence, it is the truism of the age, that the masses, both of the middle and even of the working classes, are treading upon the heels of their superiors.

If we now consider the progress made by those

same masses in the capacity and habit of co-operation, we find it equally surprising. At what period were the operations of productive industry carried on upon anything like their present scale? Were so many hands ever before employed at the same time upon the same work, as now in all the principal departments of manufactures and commerce? To how enormous an extent is business now carried on by joint-stock companies—in other words, by many small capitals thrown together to form one great one. The country is covered with associations. There are societies for political, societies for religious, societies for philanthropic purposes. But the greatest novelty of all is the spirit of combination which has grown up among the working classes. The present age has seen the commencement of benefit societies; and they now, as well as the more questionable Trades Unions, overspread the whole country. A more powerful, though not so ostensible, instrument of combination than any of these, has but lately become universally accessible —the newspaper. The newspaper carries home the voice of the many to every individual among them; by the newspaper, each learns that others are feeling as he feels, and that if he is ready, he will find them also prepared to act upon what they feel. The newspaper is the telegraph which carries the signal throughout the country, and the flag round which it rallies. Hundreds of newspapers speaking in the same voice at once, and the rapidity of communication afforded by improved means of locomotion, were what enabled the whole country to combine in that simultaneous energetic demonstration of determined will which carried the Reform Act. Both these

facilities are on the increase, every one may see how rapidly; and they will enable the people on all decisive occasions to form a collective will, and render that collective will irresistible.

To meet this wonderful development of physical and mental power on the part of the masses, can it be said that there has been any corresponding quantity of intellectual power or moral energy unfolded among those individuals or classes who have enjoyed superior advantages? No one, we think, will affirm it. There is a great increase of humanity, a decline of bigotry, as well as of arrogance and the conceit of caste, among our conspicuous classes; but there is, to say the least, no increase of shining ability, and a very marked decrease of vigour and energy. With all the advantages of this age, its facilities for mental cultivation, the incitements and the rewards which it holds out to exalted talents, there can scarcely be pointed out in the European annals any stirring times which have brought so little that is distinguished, either morally or intellectually, to the surface.

That this, too, is no more than was to be expected from the tendencies of civilization, when no attempt is made to correct them, we shall have occasion to show presently. But even if civilization did nothing to lower the eminences, it would produce an exactly similar effect by raising the plains. When the masses become powerful, an individual, or a small band of individuals, can accomplish nothing considerable except by influencing the masses; and to do this becomes daily more difficult, from the constantly increasing number of those who are vying with one another to attract the public attention. Our position, therefore,

is established, that by the natural growth of civilization, power passes from individuals to masses, and the weight and importance of an individual, as compared with the mass, sink into greater and greater insignificance.

The change which is thus in progress, and to a great extent consummated, is the greatest ever recorded in social affairs; the most complete, the most fruitful in consequences, and the most irrevocable. Whoever can meditate on it, and not see that so great a revolution vitiates all existing rules of government and policy, and renders all practice and all predictions grounded only on prior experience worthless, is wanting in the very first and most elementary principle of statesmanship in these times.

'Il faut,' as M. de Tocqueville has said, 'une science politique nouvelle à un monde tout nouveau.' The whole face of society is reversed—all the natural elements of power have definitively changed places, and there are people who talk of standing up for ancient institutions, and the duty of sticking to the British Constitution settled in 1688! What is still more extraordinary, these are the people who accuse others of disregarding variety of circumstances, and imposing their abstract theories upon all states of society without discrimination.

We put it to those who call themselves Conservatives, whether, when the chief power in society is passing into the hands of the masses, they really think it possible to prevent the masses from making that power predominant as well in the government as elsewhere? The triumph of democracy, or, in

other words, of the government of public opinion, does not depend upon the opinion of any individual or set of individuals that it ought to triumph, but upon the natural laws of the progress of wealth, upon the diffusion of reading, and the increase of the facilities of human intercourse. If Lord Kenyon or the Duke of Newcastle could stop these, they might accomplish something. There is no danger of the prevalence of democracy in Syria or Timbuctoo. But he must be a poor politician who does not know, that whatever is the growing power in society will force its way into the government, by fair means or foul. The distribution of constitutional power cannot long continue very different from that of real power, without a convulsion. Nor, if the institutions which impede the progress of democracy could be by any miracle preserved, could even they do more than render that progress a little slower. Were the Constitution of Great Britain to remain henceforth unaltered, we are not the less under the dominion, becoming every day more irresistible, of public opinion.

With regard to the advance of democracy, there are two different positions which it is possible for a rational person to take up, according as he thinks the masses prepared, or unprepared, to exercise the control which they are acquiring over their destiny, in a manner which would be an improvement upon what now exists. If he thinks them prepared, he will aid the democratic movement; or if he deem it to be proceeding fast enough without him, he will at all events refrain from resisting it. If, on the contrary, he thinks the masses unprepared for complete control

over their government—seeing at the same time that, prepared or not, they cannot long be prevented from acquiring it—he will exert his utmost efforts in contributing to prepare them; using all means, on the one hand, for making the masses themselves wiser and better; on the other, for so rousing the slumbering energy of the opulent and lettered classes, so storing the youth of those classes with the profoundest and most valuable knowledge, so calling forth whatever of individual greatness exists or can be raised up in the country, as to create a power which might partially rival the mere power of the masses, and might exercise the most salutary influence over them for their own good. When engaged earnestly in works like these, one can understand how a rational person might think that in order to give more time for the performance of them, it were well if the current of democracy, which can in no sort be stayed, could be prevailed upon for a time to flow less impetuously. With Conservatives of this sort, all democrats of corresponding enlargement of aims could fraternize as frankly and cordially as with most of their own friends: and we speak from an extensive knowledge of the wisest and most high-minded of that body, when we take upon ourselves to answer for them, that they would never push forward their own political projects in a spirit or with a violence which could tend to frustrate any rational endeavours towards the object nearest their hearts, the instruction of the understandings and the elevation of the characters of all classes of their countrymen.

But who is there among the political party calling themselves Conservatives, that professes to have any

such object in view? Do they seek to employ the interval of respite which they might hope to gain by withstanding democracy, in qualifying the people to wield the democracy more wisely when it comes? Would they not far rather resist any such endeavour, on the principle that knowledge is power, and that its further diffusion would make the dreaded evil come sooner? Do the leading Conservatives in either house of parliament feel that the character of the higher classes needs renovating, to qualify them for a more arduous task and a keener strife than has yet fallen to their lot? Is not the character of a Tory lord or country-gentleman, or a Church of England parson, perfectly satisfactory to them? Is not the existing constitution of the two Universities—those bodies whose especial duty it was to counteract the debilitating influence of the circumstances of the age upon individual character, and to send forth into society a succession of minds, not the creatures of their age, but capable of being its improvers and regenerators—the Universities, by whom this their especial duty has been basely neglected, until, as is usual with all neglected duties, the very consciousness of it as a duty has faded from their remembrance,—is not, we say, the existing constitution and the whole existing system of these Universities, down to the smallest of their abuses, the exclusion of Dissenters, a thing for which every Tory, though he may not, as he pretends, die in the last ditch, will at least vote in the last division? The Church, professedly the other great instrument of national culture, long since perverted (we speak of rules, not exceptions) into a grand instrument for discouraging all culture

inconsistent with blind obedience to established maxims and constituted authorities—what Tory has a scheme in view for any changes in this body, but such as may pacify assailants, and make the institution wear a less disgusting appearance to the eye? What political Tory will not resist to the very last moment any alteration in that Church, which would prevent its livings from being the provision for a family, its dignities the reward of political or of private services? The Tories, those at least connected with parliament or office, do not aim at having good institutions, or even at preserving the present ones: their object is to profit by them while they exist.

We scruple not to express our belief that a truer spirit of conservation, as to everything good in the principles and professed objects of our old institutions, lives in many who are determined enemies of those institutions in their present state, than in most of those who call themselves Conservatives. But there are many well-meaning people who always confound attachment to an end, with pertinacious adherence to any set of means by which it either is, or is pretended to be, already pursued; and have yet to learn, that bodies of men who live in honour and importance upon the pretence of fulfilling ends which they never honestly seek, are the great hindrance to the attainment of those ends; and that whoever has the attainment really at heart, must expect a war of extermination with all such confederacies.

Thus far as to the political effects of Civilization. Its moral effects, which as yet we have only glanced

at, demand further elucidation. They may be considered under two heads: the direct influence of Civilization itself upon individual character, and the moral effects produced by the insignificance into which the individual falls in comparison with the masses.

One of the effects of a high state of civilization upon character, is a relaxation of individual energy: or rather the concentration of it within the narrow sphere of the individual's money-getting pursuits. As civilization advances, every person becomes dependent, for more and more of what most nearly concerns him, not upon his own exertions, but upon the general arrangements of society. In a rude state, each man's personal security, the protection of his family, his property, his liberty itself, depend greatly upon his bodily strength and his mental energy or cunning: in a civilized state, all this is secured to him by causes extrinsic to himself. The growing mildness of manners is a protection to him against much that he was before exposed to, while for the remainder he may rely with constantly increasing assurance upon the soldier, the policeman, and the judge; and (where the efficiency or purity of those instruments, as is usually the case, lags behind the general march of civilization) upon the advancing strength of public opinion. There remain, as inducements to call forth energy of character, the desire of wealth or of personal aggrandizement, the passion of philanthropy, and the love of active virtue. But the objects to which these various feelings point are matters of choice, not of necessity, nor do the feelings act with anything like equal force upon all minds. The only one of them which can be considered as anything

like universal, is the desire of wealth; and wealth being, in the case of the majority, the most accessible means of gratifying all their other desires, nearly the whole of the energy of character which exists in highly civilized societies concentrates itself on the pursuit of that object. In the case, however, of the most influential classes—those whose energies, if they had them, might be exercised on the greatest scale and with the most considerable result—the desire of wealth is already sufficiently satisfied, to render them averse to suffer pain or incur much voluntary labour for the sake of any further increase. The same classes also enjoy, from their station alone, a high degree of personal consideration. Except the high offices of the State, there is hardly anything to tempt the ambition of men in their circumstances. Those offices, when a great nobleman could have them for asking for, and keep them with less trouble than he could manage his private estate, were, no doubt, desirable enough possessions for such persons; but when they become posts of labour, vexation, and anxiety, and besides cannot be had without paying the price of some previous toil, experience shows that among men unaccustomed to sacrifice their amusements and their ease, the number upon whom these high offices operate as incentives to activity, or in whom they call forth any vigour of character, is extremely limited. Thus it happens that in highly civilized countries, and particularly among ourselves, the energies of the middle classes are almost confined to money-getting, and those of the higher classes are nearly extinct.

There is another circumstance to which we may trace much both of the good and of the bad qualities

which distinguish our civilization from the rudeness of former times. One of the effects of civilization (not to say one of the ingredients in it) is, that the spectacle, and even the very idea, of pain, is kept more and more out of the sight of those classes who enjoy in their fulness the benefits of civilization. The state of perpetual personal conflict, rendered necessary by the circumstances of former times, and from which it was hardly possible for any person, in whatever rank of society, to be exempt, necessarily habituated every one to the spectacle of harshness, rudeness, and violence, to the struggle of one indomitable will against another, and to the alternate suffering and infliction of pain. These things, consequently, were not as revolting even to the best and most actively benevolent men of former days, as they are to our own; and we find the recorded conduct of those men frequently such as would be universally considered very unfeeling in a person of our own day. They, however, thought less of the infliction of pain, because they thought less of pain altogether. When we read of actions of the Greeks and Romans, or of our own ancestors, denoting callousness to human suffering, we must not think that those who committed these actions were as cruel as we must become before we could do the like. The pain which they inflicted, they were in the habit of voluntarily undergoing from slight causes; it did not appear to them as great an evil, as it appears, and as it really is, to us, nor did it in any way degrade their minds. In our own time the necessity of personal collision between one person and another is, comparatively speaking, almost at an end. All those necessary portions of the busi-

ness of society which oblige any person to be the immediate agent or ocular witness of the infliction of pain, are delegated by common consent to peculiar and narrow classes: to the judge, the soldier, the surgeon, the butcher, and the executioner. To most people in easy circumstances, any pain, except that inflicted upon the body by accident or disease, and upon the mind by the inevitable sorrows of life, is rather a thing known of than actually experienced. This is much more emphatically true in the more refined classes, and as refinement advances: for it is in avoiding the presence not only of actual pain, but of whatever suggests offensive or disagreeable ideas, that a great part of refinement consists. We may remark too, that this is possible only by a perfection of mechanical arrangements impracticable in any but a high state of civilization. Now, most kinds of pain and annoyance appear much more unendurable to those who have little experience of them, than to those who have much. The consequence is that, compared with former times, there is in the more opulent classes of modern civilized communities much more of the amiable and humane, and much less of the heroic. The heroic essentially consists in being ready, for a worthy object, to do and to suffer, but especially to do, what is painful or disagreeable: and whoever does not early learn to be capable of this, will never be a great character. There has crept over the refined classes, over the whole class of gentlemen in England, a moral effeminacy, an inaptitude for every kind of struggle. They shrink from all effort, from everything which is troublesome and disagreeable. The same causes which render them sluggish and unenter-

prising, make them, it is true, for the most part, stoical under inevitable evils. But heroism is an active, not a passive quality; and when it is necessary not to bear pain but to seek it, little needs be expected from the men of the present day. They cannot undergo labour, they cannot brook ridicule, they cannot brave evil tongues: they have not hardihood to say an unpleasant thing to any one whom they are in the habit of seeing, or to face, even with a nation at their back, the coldness of some little coterie which surrounds them. This torpidity and cowardice, as a general characteristic, is new in the world: but (modified by the different temperaments of different nations) it is a natural consequence of the progress of civilization, and will continue until met by a system of cultivation adapted to counteract it.

If the source of great virtues thus dries up, great vices are placed, no doubt, under considerable restraint. The *régime* of public opinion is adverse to at least the indecorous vices: and as that restraining power gains strength, and certain classes or individuals cease to possess a virtual exemption from it, the change is highly favourable to the outward decencies of life. Nor can it be denied that the diffusion of even such knowledge as civilization naturally brings, has no slight tendency to rectify, though it be but partially, the standard of public opinion; to undermine many of those prejudices and superstitions which made mankind hate each other for things not really odious; to make them take a juster measure of the tendencies of actions, and weigh more correctly the evidence on which they condemn or applaud their fellow-creatures; to make, in short, their approbation

direct itself more correctly to good actions, and their disapprobation to bad. What are the limits to this natural improvement in public opinion, when there is no other sort of cultivation going on than that which is the accompaniment of civilization, we need not at present inquire. It is enough that within those limits there is an extensive range; that as much improvement in the general understanding, softening of the feelings, and decay of pernicious errors, as naturally attends the progress of wealth and the spread of reading, suffices to render the judgment of the public upon actions and persons, so far as evidence is before them, much more discriminating and correct.

But here presents itself another ramification of the effects of civilization, which it has often surprised us to find so little attended to. The individual becomes so lost in the crowd, that though he depends more and more upon opinion, he is apt to depend less and less upon well-grounded opinion; upon the opinion of those who know him. An established character becomes at once more difficult to gain, and more easily to be dispensed with.

It is in a small society, where everybody knows everybody, that public opinion, so far as well directed, exercises its most salutary influence. Take the case of a tradesman in a small country town: to every one of his customers he is long and accurately known; their opinion of him has been formed after repeated trials; if he could deceive them once, he cannot hope to go on deceiving them in the quality of his goods; he has no other customers to look for if he loses these, while, if his goods are really what they profess to be,

he may hope, among so few competitors, that this also will be known and recognised, and that he will acquire the character, individually and professionally, which his conduct entitles him to. Far different is the case of a man setting up in business in the crowded streets of a great city. If he trust solely to the quality of his goods, to the honesty and faithfulness with which he performs what he undertakes, he may remain ten years without a customer: be he ever so honest, he is driven to cry out on the housetops that his wares are the best of wares, past, present, and to come; while if he proclaim this, however false, with sufficient loudness to excite the curiosity of passers by, and can give his commodities 'a gloss, a saleable look,' not easily to be seen through at a superficial glance, he may drive a thriving trade though no customer ever enter his shop twice. There has been much complaint of late years, of the growth, both in the world of trade and in that of intellect, of quackery, and especially of puffing: but nobody seems to have remarked, that these are the inevitable fruits of immense competition; of a state of society where any voice, not pitched in an exaggerated key, is lost in the hubbub. Success, in so crowded a field, depends not upon what a person is, but upon what he seems: mere marketable qualities become the object instead of substantial ones, and a man's labour and capital are expended less in doing anything, than in persuading other people that he has done it. Our own age has seen this evil brought to its consummation. Quackery there always was, but it once was a test of the absence of sterling qualities: there was a proverb that good wine needed no bush.

It is our own age which has seen the honest dealer driven to quackery, by hard necessity, and the certainty of being undersold by the dishonest. For the first time, arts for attracting public attention form a necessary part of the qualifications even of the deserving: and skill in these goes farther than any other quality towards ensuring success. The same intensity of competition drives the trading public more and more to play high for success, to throw for all or nothing; and this, together with the difficulty of sure calculations in a field of commerce so widely extended, renders bankruptcy no longer disgraceful, because no longer an almost certain presumption either of dishonesty or imprudence: the discredit which it still incurs belongs to it, alas! mainly as an indication of poverty. Thus public opinion loses another of those simple criteria of desert, which, and which alone, it is capable of correctly applying; and the very cause which has rendered it omnipotent in the gross, weakens the precision and force with which its judgment is brought home to individuals.

It is not solely on the private virtues, that this growing insignificance of the individual in the mass, is productive of mischief. It corrupts the very fountain of the improvement of public opinion itself; it corrupts public teaching; it weakens the influence of the more cultivated few over the many. Literature has suffered more than any other human production by the common disease. When there were few books, and when few read at all save those who had been accustomed to read the best authors, books were written with the well-grounded expectation that they

would be read carefully, and if they deserved it, would be read often. A book of sterling merit, when it came out, was sure to be heard of, and might hope to be read, by the whole reading class; it might succeed by its real excellencies, though not got up to strike at once; and even if so got up, unless it had the support of genuine merit, it fell into oblivion. The rewards were then for him who wrote *well*, not *much;* for the laborious and learned, not the crude and ill-informed writer. But now the case is reversed. 'This is a reading age; and precisely because it is so reading an age, any book which is the result of profound meditation is, perhaps, less likely to be duly and profitably read than at a former period. The world reads too much and too quickly to read well. When books were few, to get through one was a work of time and labour: what was written with thought was read with thought, and with a desire to extract from it as much of the materials of knowledge as possible. But when almost every person who can spell, can and will write, what is to be done? It is difficult to know what to read, except by reading everything; and so much of the world's business is now transacted through the press, that it is necessary to know what is printed, if we desire to know what is going on. Opinion weighs with so vast a weight in the balance of events, that ideas of no value in themselves are of importance from the mere circumstance that they *are* ideas, and have a *bonâ fide* existence as such anywhere out of Bedlam. The world, in consequence, gorges itself with intellectual food, and in order to swallow the more, *bolts* it. Nothing is now read slowly, or twice over. Books are run through

with no less rapidity, and scarcely leave a more durable impression, than a newspaper article. It is for this, among other causes, that so few books are produced of any value. The lioness in the fable boasted that though she produced only one at a birth, that one was a lion. But if each lion only counted for one, and each leveret for one, the advantage would all be on the side of the hare. When every unit is individually weak, it is only multitude that tells. What wonder that the newspapers should carry all before them? A book produces hardly a greater effect than an article, and there can be 365 of these in one year. He, therefore, who should and would write a book, and write it in the proper manner of writing a book, now dashes down his first hasty thoughts, or what he mistakes for thoughts, in a periodical. And the public is in the predicament of an indolent man, who cannot bring himself to apply his mind vigorously to his own affairs, and over whom, therefore, not he who speaks most wisely, but he who speaks most frequently, obtains the influence.'*

Hence we see that literature is becoming more and more ephemeral: books, of any solidity, are almost gone by; even reviews are not now considered sufficiently light; the attention cannot sustain itself on any serious subject, even for the space of a review-article. In the more attractive kinds of literature, novels and magazines, though the demand has so greatly increased, the supply has so outstripped it, that even a novel is seldom a lucrative speculation.

* From a paper by the author, not included in the present collection.

It is only under circumstances of rare attraction that a bookseller will now give anything to an author for copyright. As the difficulties of success thus progressively increase, all other ends are more and more sacrificed for the attainment of it; literature becomes more and more a mere reflection of the current sentiments, and has almost entirely abandoned its mission as an enlightener and improver of them.

There are now in this country, we may say, but two modes left in which an individual mind can hope to produce much direct effect upon the minds and destinies of his countrymen generally; as a member of parliament, or an editor of a London newspaper. In both these capacities much may still be done by an individual, because, while the power of the collective body is very great, the number of participants in it does not admit of much increase. One of these monopolies will be opened to competition when the newspaper stamp is taken off; whereby the importance of the newspaper press in the aggregate, considered as the voice of public opinion, will be increased, and the influence of any one writer in helping to form that opinion necessarily diminished. This we might regret, did we not remember to what ends that influence is now used, and is sure to be so while newspapers are a mere investment of capital for the sake of mercantile profit.

Is there, then, no remedy? Are the decay of individual energy, the weakening of the influence of superior minds over the multitude, the growth of charlatanerie, and the diminished efficacy of public opinion as a restraining power,—are these the price

we necessarily pay for the benefits of civilization; and can they only be avoided by checking the diffusion of knowledge, discouraging the spirit of combination, prohibiting improvements in the arts of life, and repressing the further increase of wealth and of production? Assuredly not. Those advantages which civilization cannot give—which in its uncorrected influence it has even a tendency to destroy—may yet coexist with civilization; and it is only when joined to civilization that they can produce their fairest fruits. All that we are in danger of losing we may preserve, all that we have lost we may regain, and bring to a perfection hitherto unknown; but not by slumbering, and leaving things to themselves, no more than by ridiculously trying our strength against their irresistible tendencies: only by establishing counter-tendencies, which may combine with those tendencies, and modify them.

The evils are, that the individual is lost and becomes impotent in the crowd, and that individual character itself becomes relaxed and enervated. For the first evil, the remedy is, greater and more perfect combination among individuals; for the second, national institutions of education, and forms of polity calculated to invigorate the individual character.

The former of these desiderata, as its attainment depends upon a change in the habits of society itself, can only be realized by degrees, as the necessity becomes felt; but circumstances are even now to a certain extent forcing it on. In Great Britain especially (which so far surpasses the rest of the old world in the extent and rapidity of the accumulation of wealth) the fall of profits, consequent upon the vast

increase of population and capital, is rapidly extinguishing the class of small dealers and small producers, from the impossibility of living on their diminished profits, and is throwing business of all kinds more and more into the hands of large capitalists—whether these be rich individuals, or joint-stock companies formed by the aggregation of many small capitals. We are not among those who believe that this progress is tending to the complete extinction of competition, or that the entire productive resources of the country will within any assignable number of ages, if ever, be administered by, and for the benefit of, a general association of the whole community. But we believe that the multiplication of competitors in all branches of business and in all professions—which renders it more and more difficult to obtain success by merit alone, more and more easy to obtain it by plausible pretence—will find a limiting principle in the progress of the spirit of co-operation; that in every overcrowded department there will arise a tendency among individuals so to unite their labour or their capital, that the purchaser or employer will have to choose, not among innumerable individuals, but among a few groups. Competition will be as active as ever, but the number of competitors will be brought within manageable bounds.

Such a spirit of co-operation is most of all wanted among the intellectual classes and professions. The amount of human labour, and labour of the most precious kind, now wasted, and wasted too in the cruelest manner, for want of combination, is incalculable. What a spectacle, for instance, does the medical profession present! One successful practi-

tioner burthened with more work than mortal man can perform, and which he performs so summarily that it were often better let alone;—in the surrounding streets twenty unhappy men, each of whom has been as laboriously and expensively trained as he has to do the very same thing, and is possibly as well qualified, wasting their capabilities and starving for want of work. Under better arrangements these twenty would form a corps of subalterns marshalled under their more successful leader; who (granting him to be really the ablest physician of the set, and not merely the most successful impostor) is wasting time in physicking people for headaches and heartburns, which he might with better economy of mankind's resources turn over to his subordinates, while he employed his maturer powers and greater experience in studying and treating those more obscure and difficult cases upon which science has not yet thrown sufficient light, and to which ordinary knowledge and abilities would not be adequate. By such means every person's capacities would be turned to account, and the highest minds being kept for the highest things, these would make progress, while ordinary occasions would be no losers.

But it is in literature, above all, that a change of this sort is of most pressing urgency. There the system of individual competition has fairly worked itself out, and things can hardly continue much longer as they are. Literature is a province of exertion upon which more, of the first value to human nature, depends, than upon any other; a province in which the highest and most valuable order of works, those which most contribute to form the opinions and shape

the characters of subsequent ages, are, more than in any other class of productions, placed beyond the possibility of appreciation by those who form the bulk of the purchasers in the book-market; insomuch that, even in ages when these were a far less numerous and more select class than now, it was an admitted point that the only success which writers of the first order could look to was the verdict of posterity. That verdict could, in those times, be confidently expected by whoever was worthy of it; for the good judges, though few in number, were sure to read every work of merit which appeared; and as the recollection of one book was not in those days immediately obliterated by a hundred others, they remembered it, and kept alive the knowledge of it to subsequent ages. But in our day, from the immense multitude of writers (which is now not less remarkable than the multitude of readers), and from the manner in which the people of this age are obliged to read, it is difficult for what does not strike during its novelty, to strike at all: a book either misses fire altogether, or is so read as to make no permanent impression; and the good equally with the worthless are forgotten by the next day.

For this there is no remedy, while the public have no guidance beyond booksellers' advertisements, and the ill-considered and hasty criticisms of newspapers and small periodicals, to direct them in distinguishing what is not worth reading from what is. The resource must in time be, some organized co-operation among the leading intellects of the age, whereby works of first-rate merit, of whatever class, and of whatever tendency in point of opinion, might come forth with the stamp on them, from the first, of the

approval of those whose names would carry authority. There are many causes why we must wait long for such a combination; but (with enormous defects, both in plan and in execution) the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge was as considerable a step towards it, as could be expected in the present state of men's minds, and in a first attempt. Literature has had in this country two ages; it must now have a third. The age of patronage, as Johnson a century ago proclaimed, is gone. The age of booksellers, it has been proclaimed by Mr. Carlyle, has well nigh died out. In the first there was nothing intrinsically base, nor in the second anything inherently independent and liberal. Each has done great things; both have had their day. The time is perhaps coming when authors, as a collective guild, will be their own patrons and their own booksellers.

These things must bide their time. But the other of the two great desiderata, the regeneration of individual character among our lettered and opulent classes, by the adaptation to that purpose of our institutions, and, above all, of our educational institutions, is an object of more urgency, and for which more might be immediately accomplished, if the will and the understanding were not alike wanting.

This, unfortunately, is a subject on which, for the inculcation of rational views, everything is yet to be done; for, all that we would inculcate, all that we deem of vital importance, all upon which we conceive the salvation of the next and all future ages to rest, has the misfortune to be almost equally opposed to the most popular doctrines of our own time, and to

the prejudices of those who cherish the empty husk of what has descended from ancient times. We are at issue equally with the admirers of Oxford and Cambridge, Eton and Westminster, and with the generality of their professed reformers. We regard the system of those institutions, as administered for two centuries past, with sentiments little short of utter abhorrence. But we do not conceive that their vices would be cured by bringing their studies into a closer connexion with what it is the fashion to term 'the business of the world;' by dismissing the logic and classics which are still professedly taught, to substitute modern languages and experimental physics. We would have classics and logic taught far more really and deeply than at present, and we would add to them other studies more alien than any which yet exist to the 'business of the world,' but more germane to the great business of every rational being—the strengthening and enlarging of his own intellect and character. The empirical knowledge which the world demands, which is the stock in trade of money-getting life, we would leave the world to provide for itself; content with infusing into the youth of our country a spirit, and training them to habits, which would ensure their acquiring such knowledge easily, and using it well. These, we know, are not the sentiments of the vulgar; but we believe them to be those of the best and wisest of all parties: and we are glad to corroborate our opinion by a quotation from a work written by a friend to the Universities, and by one whose tendencies are rather Conservative than Liberal; a book which, though really, and not in form merely, one of fiction, contains much subtle and ingenious thought, and the results of

much psychological experience, combined, we are compelled to say, with much caricature, and very provoking (though we are convinced unintentional) distortion and misinterpretation of the opinions of some of those with whose philosophy that of the author does not agree.

'"You believe' (a clergyman *loquitur*) 'that the University is to prepare youths for a successful career in society: I believe the sole object is to give them that manly character which will enable them to resist the influences of society. I do not care to prove that I am right, and that any university which does not stand upon this basis will be rickety in its childhood, and useless or mischievous in its manhood; I care only to assert that this was the notion of those who founded Oxford and Cambridge. I fear that their successors are gradually losing sight of this principle—are gradually beginning to think that it is their business to turn out clever lawyers and serviceable Treasury clerks—are pleased when the world compliments them upon the goodness of the article with which they have furnished it—and that this low vanity is absorbing all their will and their power to create great men, whom the age will scorn, and who will save it from the scorn of the times to come.'

'"One or two such men,' said the Liberal, 'in a generation, may be very useful; but the University gives us two or three thousand youths every year. I suppose you are content that a portion shall do week-day services.'

'"I wish to have a far more hard-working and active race than we have at present,' said the clergyman; 'men more persevering in toil, and less impatient of reward; but all experience, a thing which the schools are not privileged to despise, though the world is—all experience is against the notion, that the means to procure a supply of good ordinary men is to attempt nothing higher. I know that nine-tenths of those whom the University sends out must be hewers of wood and drawers of water; but, if I train the ten-tenths to be

so, depend upon it the wood will be badly cut, the water will be spilt. Aim at something noble; make your system such that a great man may be formed by it, and there will be a manhood in your little men of which you do not dream. But when some skilful rhetorician, or lucky rat, stands at the top of the ladder—when the University, instead of disclaiming the creature, instead of pleading, as an excuse for themselves, that the healthiest mother may, by accident, produce a shapeless abortion, stands shouting, that the world may know what great things they can do, 'we taught the boy!'—when the hatred which worldly men will bear to religion always, and to learning whenever it teaches us to soar and not to grovel, is met, not with a frank defiance, but rather with a deceitful argument to show that trade is the better for them; is it wonderful that a puny beggarly feeling should pervade the mass of our young men? that they should scorn all noble achievements, should have no higher standard of action than the world's opinion, and should conceive of no higher reward than to sit down amidst loud cheering, which continues for several moments?' *

Nothing can be more just or more forcible than the description here given of the objects which University education should aim at: we are at issue with the writer, only on the proposition that these objects ever were attained, or ever could be so, consistently with the principle which has always been the foundation of the English Universities; a principle, unfortunately, by no means confined to them. The difficulty which continues to oppose either such reform of our old academical institutions, or the establishment of such new ones, as shall give us an education capable of forming great minds, is, that in order to do so it is necessary to begin by eradicating the idea which nearly all the upholders and nearly all the impugners

* From the novel of 'Eustace Conway,' attributed to Mr. Maurice.

of the Universities rootedly entertain, as to the objects not merely of academical education, but of education itself. What is this idea? That the object of education is, not to qualify the pupil for judging what is true or what is right, but to provide that he shall think true what we think true, and right what we think right—that to teach, means to inculcate our own opinions, and that our business is not to make thinkers or inquirers, but disciples. This is the deep-seated error, the inveterate prejudice, which the real reformer of English education has to struggle against. Is it astonishing that great minds are not produced, in a country where the test of a great mind is, agreeing in the opinions of the small minds? where every institution for spiritual culture which the country has —the Church, the Universities, and almost every dissenting community—are constituted on the following as their avowed principle: that the object is, *not* that the individual should go forth determined and qualified to seek truth ardently, vigorously, and disinterestedly; *not* that he be furnished at setting out with the needful aids and facilities, the needful materials and instruments for that search, and then left to the unshackled use of them; *not* that, by a free communion with the thoughts and deeds of the great minds which preceded him, he be inspired at once with the courage to dare all which truth and conscience require, and the modesty to weigh well the grounds of what others think, before adopting contrary opinions of his own: *not* this—no; but that the triumph of the system, the merit, the excellence in the sight of God which it possesses, or which it can impart to its pupil, is, that his speculations shall

terminate in the adoption, in words, of a particular set of opinions. That provided he adhere to these opinions, it matters little whether he receive them from authority or from examination; and worse, that it matters little by what temptations of interest or vanity, by what voluntary or involuntary sophistication with his intellect, and deadening of his noblest feelings, that result is arrived at; that it even matters comparatively little whether to his mind the words are mere words, or the representatives of realities—in what sense he receives the favoured set of propositions, or whether he attaches to them any sense at all. Were ever great minds thus formed? Never. The few great minds which this country has produced have been formed in spite of nearly everything which could be done to stifle their growth. And all thinkers, much above the common order, who have grown up in the Church of England, or in any other Church, have been produced in latitudinarian epochs, or while the impulse of intellectual emancipation which gave existence to the Church had not quite spent itself. The flood of burning metal which issued from the furnace, flowed on a few paces before it congealed.

That the English Universities have, throughout, proceeded on the principle, that the intellectual association of mankind must be founded upon articles, *i.e.* upon a promise of belief in certain opinions; that the scope of all they do is to prevail upon their pupils, by fair means or foul, to acquiesce in the opinions which are set down for them; that the abuse of the human faculties so forcibly denounced by Locke under the name of 'principling' their pupils, is

their sole method in religion, politics, morality, or philosophy—is vicious indeed, but the vice is equally prevalent without and within their pale, and is no farther disgraceful to them than inasmuch as a better doctrine has been taught for a century past by the superior spirits, with whom in point of intelligence it was their duty to maintain themselves on a level. But, that when this object was attained they cared for no other; that if they could make churchmen, they cared not to make religious men; that if they could make Tories, whether they made patriots was indifferent to them; that if they could prevent heresy, they cared not if the price paid were stupidity—this constitutes the peculiar baseness of those bodies. Look at them. While their sectarian character, while the exclusion of all who will not sign away their freedom of thought, is contended for as if life depended upon it, there is hardly a trace in the system of the Universities that any other object whatever is seriously cared for. Nearly all the professorships have degenerated into sinecures. Few of the professors ever deliver a lecture. One of the few great scholars who have issued from either University for a century (and he was such before he went thither), the Rev. Connop Thirlwall, has published to the world that in his University at least, even theology —even Church of England theology—is not taught; and his dismissal, for this piece of honesty, from the tutorship of his college, is one among the daily proofs how much safer it is for twenty men to neglect their duty, than for one man to impeach them of the neglect. The only studies really encouraged are classics and mathematics; neither of them a useless

study, though the last, as an exclusive instrument for fashioning the mental powers, greatly overrated; but Mr. Whewell, a high authority against his own University, has published a pamphlet, chiefly to prove that the kind of mathematical attainment by which Cambridge honours are gained, expertness in the use of the calculus, is not that kind which has any tendency to produce superiority of intellect.* The mere shell and husk of the syllogistic logic at the one University, the wretchedest smattering of Locke and Paley at the other, are all of moral or psychological science that is taught at either.† As a means of educating the many, the Universities are absolutely null. The youth of England are not educated. The attainments of any kind required for taking all the degrees conferred by these bodies are, at Cambridge, utterly contemptible; at Oxford, we believe, of late years, somewhat higher, but still very low. Honours, indeed, are not gained but by a severe struggle; and if even the candidates for honours were mentally benefited, the system would not be worthless. But what have the senior wranglers done, even in mathe-

* The erudite and able writer in the 'Edinburgh Review' [Sir William Hamilton], who has expended an almost superfluous weight of argument and authority in combating the position incidentally maintained in Mr. Whewell's pamphlet, of the great value of mathematics as an exercise of the mind, was, we think, bound to have noticed the fact that the far more direct object of the pamphlet was one which partially coincided with that of its reviewer. We do not think that Mr. Whewell has done well what he undertook: he is vague, and is always attempting to be a profounder metaphysician than he can be; but the main proposition of his pamphlet is true and important; and he is entitled to no little credit for having discerned that important truth, and expressed it so strongly.

† We should except, at Oxford, the Ethics, Politics, and Rhetoric of Aristotle. These are part of the course of classical instruction, and are so far an exception to the rule, otherwise pretty faithfully observed at both Universities, of cultivating only the least useful parts of ancient literature.

matics? Has Cambridge produced, since Newton, one great mathematical genius? We do not say an Euler, a Laplace, or a Lagrange, but such as France has produced a score of during the same period. How many books which have thrown light upon the history, antiquities, philosophy, art, or literature of the ancients, have the two Universities sent forth since the Reformation? Compare them, not merely with Germany, but even with Italy or France. When a man is pronounced by them to have excelled in their studies, what do the Universities do? They give him an income, not for continuing to learn, but for having learnt; not for doing anything, but for what he has already done: on condition solely of living like a monk, and putting on the livery of the Church at the end of seven years. They bribe men by high rewards to get their arms ready, but do not require them to fight.*

Are these the places of education which are to send forth minds capable of maintaining a victorious struggle with the debilitating influences of the age, and strengthening the weak side of Civilization by the support of a higher Cultivation? This, however, is what we require from these institutions; or, in their default, from others which should take their place. And the very first step towards their reform should be to unsectarianize them wholly—not by the paltry measure of allowing Dissenters to come

* Much of what is here said of the Universities, has, in a great measure, ceased to be true. The Legislature has at last asserted its right of interference; and even before it did so, the bodies had already entered into a course of as decided improvement as any other English institutions. But I leave these pages unaltered, as matter of historical record, and as an illustration of tendencies. [1859.]

and be taught orthodox sectarianism, but by putting an end to sectarian teaching altogether. The principle itself of dogmatic religion, dogmatic morality, dogmatic philosophy, is what requires to be rooted out; not any particular manifestation of that principle.

The very corner-stone of an education intended to form great minds, must be the recognition of the principle, that the object is to call forth the greatest possible quantity of intellectual *power*, and to inspire the intensest *love of truth;* and this without a particle of regard to the results to which the exercise of that power may lead, even though it should conduct the pupil to opinions diametrically opposite to those of his teachers. We say this, not because we think opinions unimportant, but because of the immense importance which we attach to them; for in proportion to the degree of intellectual power and love of truth which we succeed in creating, is the certainty that (whatever may happen in any one particular instance) in the aggregate of instances true opinions will be the result; and intellectual power and practical love of truth are alike impossible where the reasoner is shown his conclusions, and informed beforehand that he is expected to arrive at them.

We are not so absurd as to propose that the teacher should not set forth his own opinions as the true ones, and exert his utmost powers to exhibit their truth in the strongest light. To abstain from this would be to nourish the worst intellectual habit of all, that of not finding, and not looking for, certainty in anything. But the teacher himself should not be held to any creed; nor should the question be whether his

own opinions are the true ones, but whether he is well instructed in those of other people, and, in enforcing his own, states the arguments for all conflicting opinions fairly. In this spirit it is that all the great subjects are taught from the chairs of the German and French Universities. As a general rule, the most distinguished teacher is selected, whatever be his particular views, and he consequently teaches in the spirit of free inquiry, not of dogmatic imposition.

Such is the principle of all academical instruction which aims at forming great minds. The details cannot be too various and comprehensive. Ancient literature would fill a large place in such a course of instruction; because it brings before us the thoughts and actions of many great minds, minds of many various orders of greatness, and these related and exhibited in a manner tenfold more impressive, tenfold more calculated to call forth high aspirations, than in any modern literature. Imperfectly as these impressions are made by the current modes of classical teaching, it is incalculable what we owe to this, the sole ennobling feature in the slavish, mechanical thing which the moderns call education. Nor is it to be forgotten among the benefits of familiarity with the monuments of antiquity, and especially those of Greece, that we are taught by it to appreciate and to admire intrinsic greatness, amidst opinions, habits, and institutions most remote from ours; and are thus trained to that large and catholic toleration, which is founded on understanding, not on indifference—and to a habit of free, open sympathy with powers of mind and nobleness of character, howsoever exemplified. Were but the languages and literature of anti-

quity so taught that the glorious images they present might stand before the student's eyes as living and glowing realities—that, instead of lying a *caput mortuum* at the bottom of his mind, like some foreign substance in no way influencing the current of his thoughts or the tone of his feelings, they might circulate through it, and become assimilated, and be part and parcel of himself!—then should we see how little these studies have yet done for us, compared with what they have yet to do.

An important place in the system of education which we contemplate would be occupied by history: because it is the record of all great things which have been achieved by mankind, and because when philosophically studied it gives a certain largeness of conception to the student, and familiarizes him with the action of great causes. In no other way can he so completely realize in his own mind (howsoever he may be satisfied with the proof of them as abstract propositions) the great principles by which the progress of man and the condition of society are governed. Nowhere else will the infinite varieties of human nature be so vividly brought home to him, and anything cramped or one-sided in his own standard of it so effectually corrected; and nowhere else will he behold so strongly exemplified the astonishing pliability of our nature, and the vast effects which may under good guidance be produced upon it by honest endeavour. The literature of our own and other modern nations should be studied along with the history, or rather as part of the history.

In the department of pure intellect, the highest place will belong to logic and the philosophy of mind:

the one, the instrument for the cultivation of all sciences; the other, the root from which they all grow. It scarcely needs be said that the former ought not to be taught as a mere system of technical rules, nor the latter as a set of concatenated abstract propositions. The tendency, so strong everywhere, is strongest of all here, to receive opinions into the mind without any real understanding of them, merely because they seem to follow from certain admitted premises, and to let them lie there as forms of words, lifeless and void of meaning. The pupil must be led to interrogate his own consciousness, to observe and experiment upon himself: of the mind, by any other process, little will he ever know.

With these should be joined all those sciences, in which great and certain results are arrived at by mental processes of some length or nicety: not that all persons should study all these sciences, but that some should study all, and all some. These may be divided into sciences of mere ratiocination, as mathematics; and sciences partly of ratiocination, and partly of what is far more difficult, comprehensive observation and analysis. Such are, in their *rationale*, even the sciences to which mathematical processes are applicable: and such are all those which relate to human nature. The philosophy of morals, of government, of law, of political economy, of poetry and art, should form subjects of systematic instruction, under the most eminent professors who could be found; these being chosen, not for the particular doctrines they might happen to profess, but as being those who were most likely to send forth pupils qualified in point of disposition and attainments to choose doc-

trines for themselves. And why should not religion be taught in the same manner? Not until then will one step be made towards the healing of religious differences: not until then will the spirit of English religion become catholic instead of sectarian, favourable instead of hostile to freedom of thought and the progress of the human mind.

With regard to the changes, in forms of polity and social arrangements, which, in addition to reforms in education, we conceive to be required for regenerating the character of the higher classes; to express them even summarily would require a long discourse. But the general idea from which they all emanate, may be stated briefly. Civilization has brought about a degree of security and fixity in the possession of all advantages once acquired, which has rendered it possible for a rich man to lead the life of a Sybarite, and nevertheless enjoy throughout life a degree of power and consideration which could formerly be earned or retained only by personal activity. We cannot undo what civilization has done, and again stimulate the energy of the higher classes by insecurity of property, or danger of life or limb. The only adventitious motive it is in the power of society to hold out, is reputation and consequence; and of this as much use as possible should be made for the encouragement of desert. The main thing which social changes can do for the improvement of the higher classes—and it is what the progress of democracy is insensibly but certainly accomplishing—is gradually to put an end to every kind of unearned distinction, and let the only road open to honour and ascendancy be that of personal qualities.

APHORISMS.*

A FRAGMENT.

THERE are two kinds of wisdom: in the one, every age in which science flourishes, surpasses, or ought to surpass, its predecessors; of the other, there is nearly an equal amount in all ages. The first is the wisdom which depends on long chains of reasoning, a comprehensive survey of the whole of a great subject at once, or complicated and subtle processes of metaphysical analysis: this is properly Philosophy. The other is that acquired by experience of life, and a good use of the opportunities possessed by all who have mingled much with the world, or who have a large share of human nature in their own breasts. This unsystematic wisdom, drawn by acute minds in all periods of history from their personal experience, is properly termed the wisdom of ages; and every lettered age has left a portion of it upon record. It is nowhere more genuine than in the old fabulists, Æsop and others. The speeches in Thucydides are among the most remarkable specimens of it. Aristotle and Quintilian have worked up rich stores of it into their systematic writings; nor ought Horace's Satires, and especially his Epistles, to be forgotten. But the form in which this kind of wisdom most

* *London and Westminster Review*, January 1837.

naturally embodies itself is that of aphorisms: and such, from the Proverbs of Solomon to our own day, is the shape it has oftenest assumed.

Some persons, who cannot be satisfied unless they have the forms of accurate knowledge as well as the substance, object to aphorisms, because they are unsystematic. These objectors forget that to be unsystematic is of the essence of all truths which rest on specific experiment. A systematic treatise is the most natural form for delivering truths which grow out of one another; but truths, each of which rests on its own independent evidence, may surely be exhibited in the same unconnected state in which they were discovered. Philosophy may afterwards trace the connexion among these truths, detect the more general principles of which they are manifestations, and so systematize the whole. But we need not wait till this is done, before we record them, and act upon them. On the contrary, these detached truths are at once the materials and the tests of philosophy itself; since philosophy is not called in to prove them, but may very justly be required to account for them.

A more valid objection to aphorisms, as far as it goes, is, that they are very seldom exactly true; but then this, unfortunately, is an objection to all human knowledge. A proverb or an apophthegm—any proposition epigrammatically expressed—almost always goes more or less beyond the strict truth: the fact which it states is enunciated in a more unqualified manner than the truth warrants. But when logicians have done their best to correct the proposition by just modifications and limitations, is the case much

mended? Very little. Every really existing Thing is a compound of such innumerable properties, and has such an infinity of relations with all other things in the universe, that almost every law to which it appears to be subject, is liable to be set aside or frustrated, either by some other law of the same object, or by the laws of some other object which interferes with it; and as no one can possibly foresee or grasp all these contingencies, much less express them in such an imperfect language as that of words, no one needs flatter himself that he can lay down propositions sufficiently specific to be available for practice, which he may afterwards apply mechanically without any exercise of thought. It is given to no human being to stereotype a set of truths, and walk safely by their guidance with his mind's eye closed. Let us envelop our proposition with what exceptions and qualifications we may, fresh exceptions will turn up, and fresh qualifications be found necessary, the moment any one attempts to act upon it. Not aphorisms, therefore, alone, but all general propositions whatever, require to be taken with a large allowance for inaccuracy; and, we may venture to add, this allowance is much more likely to be made, when, the proposition being avowedly presented without any limitations, every one must see that he is left to make the limitations for himself.

If aphorisms were less likely than systems to have truth in them, it would be difficult to account for the fact that almost all books of aphorisms, which have ever acquired a reputation, have retained, and deserved to retain it; while, how wofully the reverse is the case with systems of philosophy, no student is ignorant.

One reason for this difference may be, that books of aphorisms are seldom written but by persons of genius. There are, indeed, to be found books like Mr. Colton's 'Lacon'—centos of trite truisms and trite falsisms pinched into epigrams. But, on the whole, he who draws his thoughts (as Coleridge says) from a cistern and not from a spring, will generally be more sparing of them than to give ten ideas in a page instead of ten pages to an idea. And where there is originality in aphorisms, there is generally truth, or a bold approach to some truth which really lies beneath. A scientific system is often spun out of a few original assumptions, without any intercourse with nature at all; but he who has generalized copiously and variously from actual experience, must have thrown aside so many of his first generalizations as he went on, that the residuum can hardly be altogether worthless.

Of books of aphorisms, written by men of genius, the 'Pensées' of Pascal is perhaps the least valuable in comparison with its reputation; but even this, in so far as it is aphoristic, is acute and profound: it fails when it is perverted by the author's *systematic* views on religion. La Rochefoucault, again, has been inveighed against as a 'libeller of human nature,' &c. chiefly from not understanding his drift. His 'Maxims' are a series of delineations, by a most penetrating observer, of the workings of habitual selfishness in the human breast; and they are true to the letter, of all thoroughly selfish persons, and of all other persons in proportion as they are selfish. A man of a warmer sympathy with mankind would indeed have enunciated his propositions in less sweep-

ing terms; not that there was any fear of leading the world into the mistake that there was neither virtue nor feeling in it; but because a generous spirit could not have borne to chain itself down to the contemplation of littleness and meanness, unless for the express purpose of showing to others against what degrading influences, and in what an ungenial atmosphere, it was possible to maintain elevation of feeling and nobleness of conduct. The error of La Rochefoucault has been avoided by Chamfort, the more high-minded and more philosophic La Rochefoucault of the eighteenth century. In his posthumous work, the 'Pensées, Maximes, Caractères et Anecdôtes' (a book which, to its other merits, adds that of being one of the best collections of *bons mots* in existence), he lays open the basest parts of vulgar human nature, with as keen an instrument and as unshrinking a hand as his precursor; but not with that cool indifference of manner, like a man who is only thinking of saying clever things; he does it with the concentrated bitterness of one whose own life has been made valueless to him by having his lot cast among these basenesses, and whose sole consolation is in the thought that human nature is not the wretched thing it appears, and that in better circumstances it will produce better things. Nor does he ever leave his reader, for long together, without being reminded that he is speaking, not of what might be, but of what now is.

ARMAND CARREL.*

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTICES BY MM. NISARD AND LITTRÉ

THESE little works are the tribute paid by two distinguished writers to one whose memory, though he was but shown to the world, the world will not, and must not be suffered to let die. Cut off at the age of thirty-six by that union of misfortune and fault (*schicksal und eigene schuld*) to which it has been asserted that all human miscarriages are imputable, he lived long enough to show that he was one of the few, never so few as in these latter times, who seem raised up to turn the balance of events at some trying moment in the history of nations, and to have or to want whom, at critical periods, is the salvation or the destruction of an era.

We seize the opportunity to contribute what we can, as well from our own knowledge as from the materials supplied by MM. Nisard and Littré, towards a true picture of a man, more worthy to be known, and more fit to be imitated, than any who has occupied a position in European politics for many years. It has not been given to those who knew Carrel, to see him in any of those situations of outward power and honour, to which he would certainly have forced his way, and which, instead of being honours to *him*, it was reserved for him perhaps to rescue from

* *London and Westminster Review*, October 1837.

ignominy. The man whom not only his friends but his enemies, and all France, would have proclaimed President or Prime Minister with one voice, if any of the changes of this changeable time had again given ascendancy to the people's side, is gone; and his place is not likely to be again filled in our time. But there is left to us his memory, and his example. We can still remember and meditate on what he was, how much and under how great disadvantages he accomplished, and what he would have been. We can learn from the study of him, what we all, but especially those of kindred principles and aspirations, must be, if we would make those principles effectual for good, those aspirations realities, and not the mere dreams of an idle and self-conceited imagination.

Who, then, and what was Armand Carrel? 'An editor of a republican newspaper,' exclaims some English Tory, in a voice in which it is doubtful whether the word 'republican' or 'newspaper' is uttered in the most scornful intonation. Carrel *was* the editor of a republican newspaper: his glory consists precisely in this, that being that, and *by* being that, he was the greatest political leader of his time. And we do not mean by a political leader one who can create and keep together a political party, or who can give it importance in the State, or even who can make it deserve importance, but who can do any and every one of all these, and do them with an easy superiority of genius and character, which renders competition hopeless. Such was Carrel. Ripened by years and favoured by opportunity, he might have been the Mirabeau or the Washington of his age, or both in one.

The life of Carrel may be written in a few sentences. 'Armand Carrel,' says M. Littré, 'was a sub-lieutenant and a journalist: in that narrow circle was included the life of a man who, dying in the flower of youth, leaves a name known to all France, and lamented even by his political enemies. His celebrity came not from the favour of governments, nor from those elevated functions which give an easy opportunity of acquiring distinction, or, at the least, notoriety. Implicated in the conspiracies against the Restoration, an officer in the service of the Spanish Constitution, taken prisoner in Catalonia and condemned to death; bold in the opposition before the July Revolution, still bolder after it; he was always left to his own resources, so as never to pass for more than his intrinsic worth: no borrowed lustre was ever shed on him; he had no station but that which he created for himself. Fortune, the inexplicable chance which distributes cannon-balls in a battle, and which has so large a dominion in human affairs, did little or nothing for him; he had no 'star,' no 'run of luck;' and no one ever was less the product of favourable circumstances: he sought them not, and they came not. Force of character in difficult times, admirable talents as a writer at all times, nobleness of soul towards friends and enemies; these were what sustained him, and gave him in all quarters and in all times, not only an elevated place in the esteem of men, but an ascendancy over them.'

Thus far M. Littré, a man who does not cast his words at random—a witness, whose opinions indeed are those of Carrel, but whose life is devoted to other pursuits than politics, and whose simplicity and

purity of character, esteemed by men who do not share his opinions, peculiarly qualified him to declare of Carrel that which the best men in France, of whatever party or shade of opinion, feel. M. Nisard, the representative of a much fainter shade of liberalism than M. Littré, does but fill up the same outline with greater richness of detail, with the addition of many interesting traits of personal character, and with a more analytical philosophy. From the two together we have learned the facts of the early life of Carrel, and many particulars of his habits and disposition, which could be known only to familiar companions. On the great features which make up a character, they show us almost nothing in Carrel which we had not ourselves seen in him: but, in what they have communicated, we find all those details which justify our general idea; and their recollections bear to our own the natural relation between likenesses of the same figure taken from different points. We can therefore, with increased confidence, attempt to describe what Carrel was; what the world has lost in him, and in what it may profit by his example.

The circumstance most worthy of commemoration in Carrel is not that he was an unblemished patriot in a time of general political corruption; others have been that, others are so even at present. Nor is it that he was the first political writer of his time: he could not have been this, if he had not been something to which his character as a writer was merely subsidiary. There are no great writers but those whose qualities as writers are built upon their qualities as human beings—are the mere manifestation and expression of those qualities: all besides is hollow

and meretricious, and if a writer who assumes a stile for the sake of stile, ever acquires a place in literature, it is in so far as he assumes the stile of those whose stile is not assumed; of those to whom language altogether is but the utterance of their feelings, or the means to their practical ends.

Carrel was one of these; and it may even be said that being a writer was to him merely an accident. He was neither by character nor by preference a man of speculation and discussion, for whom the press, if still but a means, is the best and often the sole means of fulfilling his vocation. The career of an administrator or that of a military commander would have been more to Carrel's taste, and in either of them he would probably have excelled. The true idea of Carrel is not that of a literary man, but of a man of action, using the press as his instrument; and in no other aspect does his character deserve more to be studied by those of all countries, who are qualified to resemble him.

He was a man called to take an active part in the government of mankind, and needing an engine with which to move them. Had his lot been cast in the cabinet or in the camp, of the cabinet or of the camp he would have made his instrument. Fortune did not give him such a destiny, and his principles did not permit him the means by which he could have acquired it. Thus excluded from the region of deeds, he had still that of words; and words are deeds, and the cause of deeds. Carrel was not the first to see, but he was the first practically to realize, the new destination of the political press in modern times. It is now beginning to be felt that journalism is to

modern Europe what political oratory was to Athens and Rome, and that, to become what it ought, it should be wielded by the same sort of men: Carrel seized the sceptre of journalism, and with that, as with the baton of a general-in-chief, ruled amidst innumerable difficulties and reverses that 'fierce democracy,' which he perhaps alone of all men living, trampled upon and irritated as it has been, could have rendered at once gentle and powerful.

Such a position did Carrel occupy, for a few short years in the history of his time. A brief survey of the incidents of his career and the circumstances of his country, will show how he acquitted himself in this situation. That he committed no mistakes in it, we are nowise concerned to prove. We may even, with the modesty befitting a distant observer, express our opinion as to what his mistakes were. But we have neither known nor read of any man of whom it could be said with assurance that, in Carrel's circumstances and at his years, he would have committed fewer; and we are certain that there have been none whose achievements would have been greater, or whose errors nobler or more nobly redeemed.

Carrel was the son of a merchant of Rouen. He was intended for business, but his early passion for a military career induced his father (a decided royalist) to send him to the Ecole Militaire of St. Cyr. 'His literary studies,' says M. Nisard, 'were much neglected. He himself has told me that, although one of the best scholars in capacity, he was one of the most moderate in attainment. His military predilections showed themselves, even at school, in the choice of

his reading. His favourite authors were the historians, especially where they treated of military events. All other studies he was impatient of, and they profited him little. I have heard him say, however, that Virgil made an impression on him, and he has sometimes repeated verses to me which his memory had retained unforgotten, though never again read. . . . After leaving school, and while preparing for St. Cyr, he directed his studies exclusively to history and the strategic art. At St. Cyr he devoted to the same occupation all the time which the duties of the place allowed him.' On leaving St. Cyr he entered the army as a sub-lieutenant, the grade answering in the French army to that of an ensign in the English.

In this early direction of the tastes and pursuits of Carrel, we may trace the cause of almost his only defects, and of his greatest qualities. From it he doubtless derived the practicalness (if the word may be pardoned) in which the more purely speculative Frenchmen of the present day (constituting a large proportion of the most accomplished minds of our age) it may be said without disrespect to them, are generally deficient; and of which in England we have too much, with but little of the nobler quality which in Carrel it served to temper and rein in. It is easy to be practical, in a society all practical: there is a practicalness which comes by nature, to those who know little and aspire to nothing; exactly this is the sort which the vulgar form of the English mind exemplifies, and which all the English institutions of education, whatever else they may teach, are studiously conservative of: but the atmosphere which kills so much thought, sobers what it spares, and the

English who think at all, speculating under the restraining influence of such a medium, are guided more often than the thinkers of other countries into the practicalness which, instead of chaining up the spirit of speculation, lights its path and makes safe its footsteps.

What is done for the best English thinkers by the influences of the society in which they grow up, was done for Carrel by the inestimable advantage of an education and pursuits which had for their object not thinking or talking, but doing. He who thinks without any experience in action, or without having action perpetually in view; whose mind has never had anything to do but to form conceptions, without ever measuring itself or them with realities, may be a great man; thoughts may originate with him, for which the world may bless him to the latest generations. There ought to be such men, for they see many things which even wise and strong minds, which are engrossed with active life, never can be the first to see. But the man to lead his age is he who has been familiar with thought directed to the accomplishment of immediate objects, and who has been accustomed to see his theories brought early and promptly to the test of experiment; the man who has seen at the end of every theorem to be investigated, a problem to be solved; who has learned early to weigh the means which can be exerted against the obstacles which are to be overcome, and to make an estimate of means and of obstacles habitually a part of all his theories that have for their object practice, either at the present or at a more distant period. This was essentially Carrel's distinguishing character among the popular

party in his own country; and it is a side of his character which, naturally perhaps, has hardly yet been enough appreciated in France. In it he resembled Napoleon, who had learnt it in the same school, and who by it mastered and ruled, as far as so selfish a man could, his country and age. But Napoleon's really narrow and imperfectly cultivated mind, and his peremptory will, turned aside contemptuously from all speculation, and all attempt to stand up for speculation, as *bavardage*. Carrel, born at a more fortunate time, and belonging to a generation whose best heads and hearts war and the guillotine had not swept away, had an intellect capacious enough to appreciate and sympathize with whatever of truth and ultimate value to mankind there might be in all theories, together with a rootedly practical turn of mind, which seized and appropriated to itself such part only of them as might be realized, or at least might be hoped to be realized, in his own day. As with all generous spirits, his hopes sometimes deceived him as to what his country was ripe for; but a short experience always corrected his mistake, and warned him to point his efforts towards some more attainable end.

Carrel entered into life, and into a military life, at a peculiar period. By foreign force, and under circumstances humiliating to the military pride of the nation, the Bourbons had been brought back. With them had returned the emigrants with their feudal prejudices, the ultra-Catholics with their bigotry and pretensions to priestly domination. Louis XVIII., taking the advice of Fouché, though in a different sense from that in which it was given, had lain down

in the bed of Napoleon, '*s'était couché dans les draps de Napoléon*'—had preserved that vast net-work of administrative tyranny which did not exist under the old French government, which the Convention created for a temporary purpose, and which Napoleon made permanent; that system of bureaucracy, which leaves no free agent in all France, except the man at Paris who pulls the wires; which regulates from a distance of several hundred miles, the repairing of a shed or the cutting down of a tree, and allows not the people to stir a finger even in their local affairs, except indeed by such writing and printing as a host of restrictive laws permitted to them, and (if they paid 300 francs or upwards in direct taxes) by electing and sending to Paris the two-hundredth or three-hundredth fractional part of a representative, there to vote such things as the Charter of Louis XVIII. placed within the competency of the national council. That Charter, extorted from the prudence of Louis by the necessities of the times, and 'broken ere its ink was dried,' alone stood between France and a dark, soul-stifling and mind-stifling despotism, combining some of the worst of the evils which the Revolution and Napoleon had cleared away, with the worst of those which they had brought.

By a combination of good sense and folly, of which it is difficult to say which was most profitable to the cause of freedom, the Bourbons saw the necessity of giving a representative constitution, but not that of allying themselves with the class in whose hands that constitution had placed so formidable a power. They would have found them tractable enough; witness the present ruler of France, who has

'lain down in the sheets of Napoleon' with considerably more effect. The Constitution of 1814, like that of 1830 which followed it, gave a share of the governing power exclusively to the rich: if the Bourbons would but have allied themselves with the majority of the rich instead of the minority, they would have been on the throne now, and with as absolute a power as any of their predecessors, so long as they conformed to that condition. But they would not do it: they would not see that the only aristocracy possible in a wealthy community, is an aristocracy of wealth: Louis during the greater part of his reign, and Charles during the whole of his, bestowed exclusively upon the classes which had been powerful once, those favours which, had they been shared with the classes which were powerful now, would have rendered the majority of those classes the most devoted adherents of the throne. For the sake of classes who had no longer the principal weight in the country, and whose power was associated with the recollections of all which the country most detested, the Bourbons not only slighted the new aristocracy, but kept both them and the people in perpetual alarm, both for whatever was dearest to them in the institutions which the Revolution had given, and which had been cheaply purchased by the sacrifice of a whole generation, and even for the 'material interests' (such as those of the possessors of national property) which had grown out of the Revolution, and were identified with it. The Chamber of Deputies, therefore, or, as it might have been called, the new Estate of the Rich, worked like the Comitia Centuriata of the Roman Commonwealth, which, in this respect, it resembled. Like

the Comitia Centuriata, it was, from the principle of its constitution, the organ of the rich; and like that, it served as an organ for popular purposes so long as the predominant section of the rich, being excluded from a direct share in the government, had a common interest with the people. This result might have been foreseen; but the Bourbons either did not foresee it, or thought themselves strong enough to prevent it.

At the time, however, when Carrel first entered into life, any one might have been excused for thinking that the Bourbons, if they had made a bad calculation for the ultimate duration of their dynasty, had made a good one for its present interests. They had put down, with triumphant success, a first attempt at resistance by the new aristocracy.

A Chamber of furious royalists, elected immediately after the second restoration (afterwards with affectionate remembrance called the *chambre introuvable*, from the impossibility of ever again getting a similar one), had sanctioned or tolerated excesses against the opposite party, worthy only of the most sanguinary times of the Revolution; and had carried their enterprises in behalf of feudalism and bigotry to a pitch of rashness by which Louis, who was no fanatic, was seriously alarmed: and in September 1817, amidst the applauses of all France, he dissolved the Chamber, and called to his councils a semi-liberal ministry. The indignation and alarm excited by the conduct of the royalists, produced a reaction among the classes possessed of property, in favour of liberalism. By the law as it then stood, a fifth part of the Chamber went out every year: the elections in 1818 produced

hardly any but liberals; those in 1819 did the same; and those of 1820, it was evident, would give the liberal party a majority. The electoral body too, as, fortunately, electoral bodies are wont, had not confined its choice to men who represented exactly its own interests and sentiments, but had mingled with them the ablest and most honoured of its temporary allies, the defenders of the 'good old cause.' The new aristocracy could still hear, and not repudiate, the doctrines of 1789, pronounced with the limitations dictated by experience, from the eloquent lips of Foy, and Benjamin Constant, and Manuel. It could still patronize a newspaper press, free for the first time since 1792, which raised its voice for those doctrines, and for an interpretation of the charter in the spirit of them. Even among the monied classes themselves there arose, as in all aristocracies there will, some men whose talents or sympathies make them the organs of a better cause than that of aristocracy. Casimir Périer had not yet sunk the defender of the people in the defender of his counting-house; and Laffitte was then what he is still, and will be to the end of his disinterested and generous career. Among the new members of the legislature there was even found the Abbé Grégoire, one of the worthiest and most respected characters in France, but a conspicuous member of the Montagne party in the Convention.*

This rapid progress of the popular party to ascendancy was not what Louis had intended: he wished

* He has been called a regicide: had the assertion been true, it was equally true of Carnot and many others of the noblest characters in France; but the fact was otherwise. Grégoire was absent on a mission during the trial of Louis XVI., and associated himself by letter with the verdict, but not with the sentence.

to keep the liberals as a counterpoise to the priestly party, but it never entered into his purposes that they should predominate in the legislature. His '*systême de bascule*,' literally *system of see-saw*, of playing off one party against another, and maintaining his influence by throwing it always into the scale of the weakest, required that the next move should be to the royalist side. Demonstrations were therefore made towards a modification of the electoral law; to take effect while the anti-popular party had still a majority, before the dreaded period of the next annual elections. At this crisis, when the fate of parties hung trembling in the balance, the Duc de Berri, heir presumptive to the throne, fell by the hand of an assassin. This catastrophe, industriously imputed to the renewed propagation of revolutionary principles, excited general horror and alarm. The new aristocracy recoiled from their alliance with liberalism. The crime of Louvel was as serviceable to the immediate objects of those against whom it was perpetrated, as the crime of Fieschi has been since. A change of ministry took place; laws were passed restrictive of the press, and a law which, while it kept within the letter of the charter by not disfranchising any of the electors, created within the electoral body a smaller body returning an additional number of representatives. The elections which took place in consequence, gave a decided majority to the feudal and priestly party; an ultra-royalist ministry was appointed; and the triumph of the retrogrades, the party of ancient privileges, seemed assured.

It is incident to a country accustomed to a state of revolution, that the party which is defeated by peace-

ful means will try violent ones. The popular party in France was now in a similar situation to the popular party in England during the royalist reaction which followed the dissolution of the last parliament of Charles II. Like them, they had recourse to what Carrel afterwards, in his 'History of the Counter-Revolution in England,' called 'the refuge of weak parties,' conspiracy. The military revolutions in Spain, Portugal, and Naples, had inspired many ardent spirits in France with a desire to follow the example: from 1820 to 1822 Carbonaro societies spread themselves over France, and military conspiracies continually broke out and were suppressed. It would have been surprising if Carrel, whose favourite heroes even at school were Hoche, Marceau, and Kléber, whose democratic opinions had attracted the notice of his superiors at St. Cyr, and to whose youthful aspirations no glory attainable to him appeared equal to that of the successful general of a liberating army, had not been implicated in some of these conspiracies. Like almost all the bravest and most patriotic of the young men in his rank of society entertaining liberal opinions, he paid his tribute to the folly of the day; and he had a narrow escape from discovery, of which M. Littré gives the following narrative.

'Carrel was a sub-lieutenant in the 29th of the line, in 1821, when conspiracies were forming in every quarter against the Restoration. The 29th was in garrison at Béfort and New Brisach. Carrel was quartered in the latter place. He was engaged in the plot since called the conspiracy of Béfort. The officers at New Brisach who were in the secret, were

discouraged by repeated delays, and would not stir until the insurrection should have exploded at Béfort. It was indispensable, however, that they should move as soon as the blow should have been successfully struck in the latter place. The Grand Lodge (of Carbonari) had sent from Paris several conspirators; one of them, M. Joubert, had come to New Brisach, to see what was to be done; Carrel offered to go with him to Béfort, to join in the movement, and bring back the news to New Brisach. Both set off, and arrived at Béfort towards midnight. The plot had been discovered, several persons had been arrested, the conspirators were dispersed. Carrel rode back to New Brisach at full gallop, and arrived early in the morning. He had time to return to his quarters, put on his uniform, and attend the morning exercise, without any one's suspecting that he had been out all night. When an inquiry was set on foot to discover the accomplices of the Béfort conspirators, and especially to find who it was that had gone thither from New Brisach, nothing could be discovered, and suspicion rested upon any one rather than Carrel, for his careless levity of manner had made his superiors consider him a man quite unlikely to be engaged in plots.'

Nine years later, M. Joubert was heading the party which stormed the Louvre on the 29th of July, and Carrel had signed the protest of the forty-two journalists, and given, by an article in the 'National,' the first signal of resistance. This is not the only instance in the recent history of France, when, as during the first French Revolution, names lost sight of for a time, meet us again at the critical moments.

These attempts at insurrection did the Bourbons no damage, but caused them some uneasiness with regard to the fidelity of the army. The counter-revolutionary party, however, was now under the conduct of the only man of judgment and sagacity who has appeared in that party since the Revolution; M. de Villèle. This minister adopted (though, it is said, with misgiving and reluctance) the bold idea of conquering the disaffection of the army by sending it to fight against its principles. He knew that with men in the position and in the state of feeling in which it was, all depended on the first step, and that if it could but be induced to fire one shot for the *drapeau blanc* against the *tricolore*, its implicit obedience might be reckoned on for a long time to come. Accordingly, constitutional France took the field against constitutional government in Spain, as constitutional England had done before in France—in order that Ferdinand, save the mark! might be restored to the enjoyment of liberty: and the history of the campaign, by which he was restored to it, furnishes a curious picture of a victorious army putting down by force those with whom it sympathized, and protecting them against the vengeance of allies whom it despised and detested.

At this period, political refugees, and other ardent lovers of freedom, especially military men, flocked to the Spanish standard; even England, as it may be remembered, contributing her share, in the persons of Sir Robert Wilson and others. Carrel, already obnoxious by his opinions to his superior officers, and now placed between the dictates of his conscience and those of military discipline, acted like Major Cartwright

at the opening of the American war: he threw up his commission rather than fight in a cause he abhorred. Having done this, he did what Major Cartwright did not: he joined the opposite party, passed over to Barcelona in a Spanish fishing-boat, and took service in the 'foreign liberal legion,' commanded by a distinguished officer, Colonel Pachiarotti, an Italian exile.

We shall not trace Carrel through the vicissitudes of this campaign, which was full of hardships, and abounded in incidents honourable to him both as an officer and as a man. It is well known that in Catalonia the invading army experienced from Mina, Milans, and their followers, almost the only vigorous resistance it had to encounter; and in this resistance the foreign legion, in which Carrel served, bore a conspicuous part. Carrel himself has sketched the history of the contest in two articles in the *Revue Française*, much remarked at the time for their impartiality and statesmanlike views, and which first established his reputation as a writer.

In September 1823, the gallant Pachiarotti had already fallen; supported on horseback by Carrel during a long retreat after he was mortally wounded, and recommending with his dying breath to the good offices of the persons present, 'ce brave et noble jeûne homme.' What remained of the legion, after having had, in an attempt to relieve Figueras, two desperate encounters with superior force, at Llado and Llers, in which it lost half its numbers, capitulated,* and

* M. de Chièvres, aide-de-camp of M. de Damas, was the officer through whose exertions, mainly, terms were granted to the legion; and Carrel, who never forgot generosity in an enemy, was able, by the manner in which he

Carrel became the prisoner of his former commanding officer, the Baron de Damas. As a condition of the surrender, M. de Damas pledged himself to use his utmost exertions for obtaining the pardon of all the French who were included in the capitulation. Though such a pledge was formally binding only on the officer who gave it, no government could without infamy have refused to fulfil its conditions; least of all the French cabinet, of which M. de Damas almost immediately afterwards became a member. But the rancour which felt itself restrained from greater acts of vindictiveness, with characteristic littleness took refuge in smaller ones. Contrary to the express promise of M. de Damas (on whose individual honour, however, no imputation appears to rest), and in disregard of the fact that Carrel had ceased to be a member of the army before he committed any act contrary to its laws, the prisoners, both officers and soldiers, were thrown into gaol, and Carrel was among the first selected to be tried by military law before a military tribunal. The first court-martial declared itself incompetent. A second was appointed, and ordered to consider itself competent. By this second court-martial he was found guilty, and sentenced to death. He appealed to a superior court, which annulled the sentence, on purely technical grounds. The desire of petty vengeance was now somewhat appeased. After about nine months of rigorous and unwholesome confinement, which he employed in diligent

related the circumstance, to do important service to M. de Chièvres at a later period, when on trial for his life upon a charge of conspiracy against the government of Louis Philippe. The particulars are in M. Littré's narrative.

studies, chiefly historical, Carrel was brought a third time to trial before a third court-martial, and acquitted; and was once again, at the age of twenty-four, turned loose upon the world.

After some hesitations, and a struggle between the wishes of his family, which pointed to a counting-house, and his own consciousness of faculties suited for a different sphere, he became secretary to M. Augustin Thierry, one of that remarkable constellation of cotemporary authors who have placed France at the head of modern historical literature. Carrel assisted M. Thierry (whose sight, since totally lost, had already been weakened by his labours) in collecting the materials for the concluding volume of his longest work, the History of the Conquest of England by the Normans: and it was by M. Thierry's advice that Carrel determined to make literature his profession. M. Nisard gives an interesting account of the manner in which the doubts and anxieties of Carrel's mother gave way before the authority of M. Thierry's reputation.

'During this period, Carrel's mother made a journey to Paris. M. Thierry's letters had not removed her uneasiness; the humble life of a man of letters did not give her confidence, and did not seem to be particularly flattering to her. She needed that M. Thierry, should renew his former assurances, and should, in a manner, stand surety for the literary capacity and for the future success of her son. At two different meetings with M. Thierry, she made a direct appeal to him to that effect. '*Vous croyez donc, Monsieur, que mon fils fait bien, et qu'il aura une carrière?*' '*Je réponds de lui,*' answered M. Thierry,

'*comme de moi-même; j'ai quelqu' expérience des vocations littéraires: votre fils a toutes les qualités qui réussissent aujourd'hui.*' While he thus spoke, Madame Carrel fixed upon him a penetrating look, as if to distinguish what was the prompting of truth, from what might be the effect of mere politeness, and a desire to encourage. The young man himself listened in respectful silence, submissive, and according to M. Thierry almost timid, before his mother, whose decision and firmness of mind had great sway over him. Carrel, in this, bowed only to his own qualities: what awed him in his mother was the quality by which afterwards, as a public man, he himself overawed others. The first meeting had left Madame Carrel still doubtful. M. Thierry, pressed between two inflexible wills, the mother requiring of him almost to become personally responsible for her son, the son silently but in intelligible language pledging himself that the guarantee should not be forfeited, had doubtless at the second meeting expressed himself still more positively. Madame Carrel returned to Rouen less uneasy and more convinced.'

Here then closes the first period of the life of Carrel; and the second, that of his strictly literary life, begins. This lasted till the foundation of the 'National,' a few months before the Revolution of July.

The period of six years, of which we have now to speak, formed the culminating point of one of the most brilliant developments of the French national mind: a development which for intensity and rapidity, and if not for duration, for the importance of its durable consequences, has not many parallels in

history. A large income not being in France, for persons in a certain rank of society, a necessary of life; and the pursuit of money being therefore not so engrossing an object as it is here, there is nothing to prevent the whole of the most gifted young men of a generation from devoting themselves to literature or science, if favourable circumstances combine to render it fashionable to do so. Such a conjuncture of circumstances was presented by the state of France, at the time when the Spanish war and its results seemed to have riveted on the necks of the French people the yoke of the feudal and sacerdotal party for many years to come. The Chamber was closed to all under the age of forty; and besides, at this particular period, the law of partial renewal had been abrogated, a septennial act had been passed, and a general election, at the height of the Spanish triumph, had left but sixteen Liberals in the whole Chamber of Deputies. The army, in a time of profound peace, officered too by the detested *émigrés*, held out no attraction. Repelled from politics, in which little preferment could be hoped for by a *roturier*, and that little at a price which a Frenchman will least of all consent to pay—religious hypocrisy; the *élite* of the educated youth of France precipitated themselves into literature and philosophy, and remarkable results soon became evident.

The national intellect seemed to make a sudden stride, from the stage of adolescence to that of early maturity. It had reached the era corresponding to that in the history of an individual mind, when, after having been taught to think (as every one is) by teachers of some particular school, and having for a

time exercised the power only in the path shown to it by its first teachers, it begins, without abandoning that, to tread also in other paths; learns to see with its naked eyes, and not through the eye-glasses of its teachers, and, from being one-sided, becomes many-sided and of no school. The French nation had had two great epochs of intellectual development. It had been taught to speak by the great writers of the seventeenth century,—to think by the philosophers of the eighteenth. The present became the era of reaction against the narrownesses of the eighteenth century, as well as against those narrownesses of another sort which the eighteenth century had left. The stateliness and conventional decorum of old French poetic and dramatic literature, gave place to a licence which made free scope for genius and also for absurdity, and let in new forms of the beautiful as well as many of the hideous. Literature shook off its chains, and used its liberty like a galley-slave broke loose; while painting and sculpture passed from one unnatural extreme to another, and the stiff school was succeeded by the spasmodic. This insurrection against the old traditions of classicism was called romanticism: and now, when the mass of rubbish to which it had given birth has produced another oscillation in opinion the reverse way, one inestimable result seems to have survived it—that life and human feeling may now, in France, be painted with as much liberty as they may be discussed, and, when painted truly, with approval: as by George Sand, and in the best writings of Balzac. While this revolution was going on in the artistic departments of literature, that in the scientific departments was still more important.

There was reaction against the metaphysics of Condillac and Helvetius; and some of the most eloquent men in France imported Kantism from Germany, and Reidism from Scotland, to oppose to it, and listening crowds applauded, and an 'eclectic philosophy' was formed. There was reaction against the irreligion of Diderot and d'Holbach; and by the side of their irreligious philosophy there grew up religious philosophies, and philosophies prophesying a religion, and a general vague feeling of religion, and a taste for religious ideas. There was reaction against the premises, rather than against the conclusions, of the political philosophy of the Constituent Assembly: men found out, that underneath all political philosophy there must be a social philosophy—a study of agencies lying deeper than forms of government, which, working through forms of government, produce in the long run most of what these seem to produce, and which sap and destroy all forms of government that lie across their path. Thus arose the new political philosophy of the present generation in France; which, considered merely as a portion of science, may be pronounced greatly in advance of all the other political philosophies which had yet existed; —a philosophy rather scattered among many minds than concentrated in one, but furnishing a storehouse of ideas to those who meditate on politics, such as all ages and nations could not furnish previously; and inspiring at the same time more comprehensive, and therefore more cautious views of the past and present, and far bolder aspirations and anticipations for the future. It would be idle to hold up any particular book as a complete specimen of this philosophy: different minds,

according to their capacities or their tendencies, have struck out or appropriated to themselves different portions of it, which as yet have only been partially harmonized and fitted into one another. But if we were asked for the book which up to the present time embodies the largest portion of the spirit, and is, in the French phrase, the highest expression, of this new political philosophy, we should point to the 'Democracy in America,' by M. de Tocqueville.

It was above all, however, in history, and historical disquisition, that the new tendencies of the national mind made themselves way. And a fact may be remarked, which strikingly illustrates the difference between the French and the English mind, and the rapidity with which an idea, thrown into French soil, takes root, and blossoms, and fructifies. Sir Walter Scott's romances have been read by every educated person in Great Britain who has grown up to manhood or womanhood in the last twenty years; and, except the memory of much pleasure, and a few mediocre imitations, forgotten as soon as read, they have left no traces that we know of in the national mind. But it was otherwise in France. Just as Byron, and the cast-off boyish extravagances of Goethe and Schiller which Byron did but follow, have been the origin of all the sentimental ruffians, the Lacenaires in imagination and in action, with which the Continent swarms, but have produced little fruit of that description, comparatively speaking, in these islands; so, to compare good influences with bad, did Scott's romances, and especially 'Ivanhoe,' which in England were only the amusement of an idle hour, give birth (or at least nourishment)

to one of the principal intellectual products of our time, the modern French school of history. M. Thierry, whose 'Letters on the History of France' gave the first impulse, proclaims the fact. Seeing, in these fictions, past events for the first time brought home to them as realities, not mere abstractions; startled by finding, what they had not dreamed of, Saxons and Normans in the reign of Richard the First; thinking men felt flash upon them for the first time the meaning of that philosophical history, that history of human life, and not of kings and battles, which Voltaire talked of, but, writing history for polemical purposes, could not succeed in realizing. Immediately the annals of France, England, and other countries, began to be systematically searched; the characteristic features of society and life at each period were gathered out, and exhibited in histories, and speculations on history, and historical fictions. All works of imagination were now expected to have a *couleur locale;* and the dramatic scenes and romances of Vitet, Mérimée, and Alfred de Vigny, among the best productions of the romantic school in those years, are evidences of the degree in which they attained it. M. de Barante wrote the history of two of the most important centuries in his country's annals, from the materials, and often in the words, of Froissart and Comines. M. Thierry's researches into the early history of the town-communities, brought to light some of the most important facts of the progress of society in France and in all Europe. While Mignet and Thiers, in a style worthy of the ancient models, but with only the common ideas of their time, recounted the recent glories and sufferings of their

country, other writers, among whom Auguste Comte in his commencements, and the founders of the St. Simonian school were conspicuous, following in the steps of Herder, Vico, and Condorcet, analyzed the facts of universal history, and connected them by generalizations, which, if unsatisfactory in some respects, explained much, and placed much in a new and striking light; and M. Guizot, a man of a greater range of ideas and greater historical impartiality than most of these, gave to the world those immortal Essays and Lectures, for which posterity will forgive him the faults of his political career.

In the midst of an age thus teeming with valuable products of thought, himself without any more active career to engross his faculties, the mind of Carrel could not remain unproductive. 'In a bookseller's back-shop,' says M. Nisard (for the young author, in his struggle for subsistence, for a short time entered seriously into the views of his family, and embarked some money supplied by them in an unsuccessful bookselling speculation), 'on a desk to which was fastened a great Newfoundland dog, Carrel, one moment absorbed in English memoirs and papers, another moment caressing his favourite animal, conceived and wrote his "History of the Counter-Revolution in England."' It was published in February 1827; and though the age has produced historical works of profounder philosophical investigation, yet in its kind, and for what it aims at, it deserves to be considered one of the most finished productions of that remarkable era.

It is a history of the two last Stuarts; of their attempts to re-establish Popery and arbitrary power,

their temporary success, and ultimate overthrow by the Revolution of 1688. Their situation and conduct presented so close a parallel to that which the two last Bourbons at that time exhibited in France, that the subject was a favourite one with the French writers of the period. There could not have been a more natural occasion for violent republicanism, or any kind of revolutionary violence, to display itself, if Carrel had been the fanatic which it is often supposed that all democratic reformers must be. But we find no republicanism in this book, no partisanship of any kind; the book is almost too favourable to the Stuarts; there is hardly anything in it which might not have been written by a clear-sighted and reflecting person of any of the political parties which divide the present day. But we find instead, in every page, distinct evidence of a thoroughly practical mind: a mind which looks out, in every situation, for the causes which were actually operating, discerns them with sagacity, sees what they must have produced, what could have been done to modify them, and how far they were practically misunderstood: a statesman, judging of statesmen by placing himself in their circumstances, and seeing what they could have done; not by the rule and square of some immutable theory of mutable things, nor by that most fallacious test for estimating men's actions, the rightness or wrongness of their speculative views. If Carrel had done nothing else, he would have shown by this book that, like Mirabeau, he was not a slave to formulas; no pre-established doctrine as to how things must be, ever prevented him from seeing them as they were. 'Everywhere and at all times,' says he, 'it is the

wants of the time which have created the conventions called political principles, and those principles have always been pushed aside by those wants.' 'All questions as to forms of government,' he says in another place, 'have their data in the condition of society, and nowhere else.' The whole spirit of the new historical school is in these two sentences. The great character by which Carrel's book differs from all other histories of the time, with which we are acquainted, is, that in it alone are we led to understand and account for all the vicissitudes of the time, from the ebb and flow of public opinion; the causes of which, his own practical sagacity, and a Frenchman's experience of turbulent times, enabled Carrel to perceive and interpret with a truth and power that must strike every competent judge who compares his short book with the long books of other people. And we may here notice, as an example of the superiority of French historical literature to ours, that, of the most interesting period in the English annals, the period of the Stuarts, France has produced, within a very few years too, the best, the second-best, and the third-best history. The best is this of Carrel; the second-best is the unfinished work of M. Guizot, his 'History of the English Revolution;' the third in merit is M. Mazure's 'History of the Revolution of 1688,' a work of greater detail, and less extensive views, but which has brought much new information from Barillon's papers and elsewhere, is unexceptionable as to impartiality, and on the whole a highly valuable accession to the literature of English history.

The style of the *Histoire de la Contre-Révolution*,

according to M. Nisard, did not give Carrel the reputation he afterwards acquired as a master of expression. But we agree with M. Nisard, a most competent judge, and a severe critic of his cotemporaries, in thinking this judgment of the French public erroneous. We already recognise in this early performance, the pen which was afterwards compared to a sword's point (*il semblait écrire avec une pointe d'acier*). It goes clean and sharp to the very heart of the thing to be said, says it without ornament or periphrasis, or *phrases* of any kind, and in nearly the fewest words in which so much could be told. The style cuts the meaning into the mind as with an edge of steel. It wants the fertility of fancy which Carrel afterwards displayed; an indispensable quality to a writer of the first rank, but one which, in spite of the authority of Cicero and Quintilian, we believe to be, oftener than is supposed, the last rather than the first quality which such writers acquire. The grand requisite of good writing is, to have something to say: to attain this, is becoming more and more the grand effort of all minds of any power, which embark in literature; and important truths, at least in human nature and life, seldom reveal themselves but to minds which are found equal to the secondary task of ornamenting those truths, when they have leisure to attend to it. A mind which has all natural human feelings, which draws its ideas fresh from realities, and, like all first-rate minds, varies and multiplies its points of view, gathers as it goes illustrations and analogies from all nature. So was it with Carrel. The fashion of the day, when he began, was picturesqueness of style, and that was what the imitative

minds were all straining for. Carrel, who wrote from himself and not from imitation, put into his style first what was in himself first, the intellect of a great writer. The other half of the character, the imaginative part, came to maturity somewhat later, and was first decidedly recognised in the Essays on the War in Spain, which, as we have already said, were published in the *Revue Française*, a periodical on the plan of the English reviews, to which nearly all the most philosophical minds in France contributed, and which was carried on for several years with first-rate ability.

The editor of this review was M. Guizot. That Guizot and Carrel should for a time be found not only fighting under the same banner, but publishing in the same periodical organ, is a fact characteristic of the fusion of parties and opinions which had by this time taken place to oppose the progress of the counter-revolution.

The victory in Spain had put the royalists in complete possession of the powers of government. The elections of 1824 had given them, and their septennial act secured to them for a period, their *chambre des trois cents*, so called from the 300 feudalists, or creatures of the feudalists, who, with about 100 more moderate royalists, and sixteen liberals of different shades, made up the whole Chamber. It is for history, already familiar with the frantic follies of this most unteachable party, to relate all they did, or attempted; the forty millions sterling which they voted into their own pockets under the name of compensation to the emigrants; their law of sacrilege, worthy of the bigotry of the middle ages; the re-establishment of the Jesuits, the putting down of the Lancasterian

schools, and throwing all the minor institutions of education (they did not yet openly venture upon the University) into the hands of the priests. The madmen thought they could force back Catholicism upon a people, of whom the educated classes, though not, as they are sometimes represented, hostile to religion, but either simply indifferent or decidedly disposed to a religion of some sort or other, had for ever bidden adieu to that form of it, and could as easily have been made Hindoos or Mussulmans as Roman Catholics. All that bribery could do was to make hypocrites, and of these (some act of hypocrisy being a condition of preferment) there were many edifying examples; among others, M. Dupin, since President of the Chamber of Deputies, who, soon after the accession of Charles the Tenth, devoutly followed the Hoste in a procession to St. Acheul.* If our memory deceive us not, Marshal Soult was another of these illustrious converts; he became one of Charles the Tenth's peers, and wanted only to have been his minister too, to have made him the Sunderland of the French 1688.

In the meantime, laws were prepared against the remaining liberties of France, and against the institutions dearest to the people, of those which the Revolution had given. Not content with an almost constant censorship on the newspaper press, the faction proposed rigid restraints upon the publication even of books below a certain size. A law also was framed to re-establish primogeniture and entails, among a nation which universally believes that the

* [Also memorable as almost the only man of political distinction who has given in a similar adhesion to the present despotism.]

family affections, on the strength of which it justly values itself, depend upon the observance of equal justice in families, and would not survive the revival of the unnatural preference for the eldest son. These laws passed the Chamber of Deputies amidst the most violent storm of public opinion which had been known in France since the Revolution. The Chamber of Peers, faithful to its mission as the Conservative branch of the Constitution, rejected them. M. de Villèle felt the danger, but a will more impetuous and a judgment weaker than his own, compelled him to advance. He created (or the King created) a batch of sixty-six peers, and dissolved the Chamber.

But affairs had greatly altered since the elections of 1824. By the progress, not only of disgust at the conduct of the faction, but of a presentiment of the terrible crisis to which it was about to lead, the whole of the new aristocracy had now gone over to the people. Not only they, but the more reasonable portion of the old aristocracy, the moderate royalist party, headed by Chateaubriand, and represented by the *Journal des Débats*, had early separated themselves from the counter-revolutionary faction of which M. de Villèle was the unwilling instrument. Both these bodies, and the popular party, now greatly increased in strength even among the electors, knit themselves in one compact mass to overthrow the Villèle Ministry. The *Aide-toi* Society, in which even M. Guizot acted a conspicuous part, but which was mainly composed of the most energetic young men of the popular party, conducted the correspondence and organized the machinery for the elections. A large majority was returned hostile to the ministry: they

were forced to retire, and the King had to submit to a ministry of moderate royalists, commonly called, from its most influential member, the Martignac Ministry.

The short interval of eighteen months, during which this ministry lasted, was the brightest period which France has known since the Revolution: for a reason which well merits attention; those who had the real power in the country, the men of property and the men of talent, had not the power at the Tuileries, nor any near prospect of having it. It is the grievous misfortune of France, that being still new to constitutional ideas and institutions, she has never known what it is to have a fair government, in which there is not one law for the party in power, and another law for its opponents. The French government is not a constitutional government—it is a despotism limited by a parliament; whatever party can get the executive into its hands, and induce a majority of the Chamber to support it, does practically whatever it pleases; hardly anything that it can be guilty of towards its opponents alienates its supporters, unless they fear that they are themselves marked out to be the next victims; and even the trampled-on minority fixes its hopes not upon limiting arbitrary power, but upon becoming the stronger party and tyrannizing in its turn. It is to the eternal honour of Carrel that he, and he almost alone, in a subsequent period far less favourable than that of which we are speaking, recognised the great principle of which all parties had more than ever lost sight;—saw that this, above all, was what his country wanted; unfurled the banner of equal justice and

equal protection to all opinions, bore it bravely aloft in weal and woe over the stormy seas on which he was cast, and when he sank, sank with it flying. It was too late. A revolution had intervened; and even those who suffered from tyranny, had learnt to hope for relief from revolution, and not from law or opinion. But during the Martignac Ministry, all parties were equally afraid of, and would have made equal sacrifices to avert, a convulsion. The idea gained ground, and appeared to be becoming general, of building up in France for the first time a government of law. It was known that the King was wedded to the counter-revolutionary party, and that without a revolution the powers of the executive would never be at the disposal of the new aristocracy of wealth, or of the men of talent who had put themselves at the head of it. But they had the command of the legislature, and they used the power which they had, to reduce within bounds that which by peaceable means they could not hope to have. For the first time it became the object of the first speculative and practical politicians in France, to limit the power of the executive; to erect barriers of opinion, and barriers of law, which it should not be able to overpass, and which should give the citizen that protection which he had never yet had in France, against the tyranny of the magistrate: to form, as it was often expressed, *les mœurs constitutionnelles*, the habits and feelings of a free government, and establish in France, what is the greatest political blessing enjoyed in England, the national feeling of respect and obedience to the law.

Nothing could seem more hopeful than the progress

which France was making, under the Martignac Ministry, towards this great improvement. The discussions of the press, and the teachings of the able men who headed the Opposition, especially the Doctrinaires (as they were called), M. Royer Collard, the Duc de Broglie, M. Guizot, and their followers, who then occupied the front rank of the popular party, were by degrees working the salutary feelings of a constitutional government into the public mind. But they had barely time to penetrate the surface. The same madness which hurled James the Second from his throne, was now fatal to Charles the Tenth. In an evil hour for France, unless England one day repay her the debt which she unquestionably owes her for the Reform Bill, the promise of this auspicious moment was blighted; the Martignac Ministry was dismissed, a set of furious *émigrés* were appointed, and a new general election having brought a majority still more hostile to them, the famous Ordonnances were issued, and the Bourbon Monarchy was swept from the face of the earth.

We have called the event which necessitated the Revolution of July, a misfortune to France. We wish earnestly to think it otherwise. But if in some forms that Revolution has brought considerable good to France, in many it has brought serious ill. Among the evils which it has done we select two of the greatest: it stopped the progress of the French people towards recognising the necessity of equal law, and a strict definition of the powers of the magistrate; and it checked, and for a time almost suspended, the literary and philosophic movement which had commenced.

On the fall of the old aristocracy, the new oligarchy came at once into power. They did not all get places, only because there were not places for all. But there was a large abundance, and they rushed upon them like tigers upon their prey. No precaution was taken by the people against this new enemy. The discussions of the press in the years preceding, confined as they had been both by public opinion and by severe legal penalties, strictly within the limits of the Charter, had not made familiar to the public mind the necessity of an extended suffrage; and the minds even of enlightened men, as we can personally testify, at the time of the formation of the new government, were in a state of the utmost obtuseness on the subject. The eighty thousand electors had hitherto been on the side of the people, and nobody seemed to see any reason why this should not continue to be the case. The oligarchy of wealth was thus allowed quietly to instal itself; its leaders, and the men of literary talent who were its writers and orators, became ministers, or expectant ministers, and no longer sought to limit the power which was henceforth to be their own; by degrees, even, as others attempted to limit it, they violated in its defence, one after another, every salutary principle of freedom which they had themselves laboured to implant in the popular mind. They reckoned, and the event shows that they could safely reckon, upon the King whom they had set up; that he would see his interest in keeping a strict alliance with them. There was no longer any rival power interested in limiting that of the party in office. There were the people; but the people could not make themselves felt in the legis-

lature; and attempts at insurrection, until the resistance becomes thoroughly national, a government is always strong enough to put down. There was the aristocracy of talent: and the course was adopted of buying off these with a portion of the spoil. One of the most deplorable effects of the new government of France, is the profligate immorality which it is industriously spreading among the ablest and most accomplished of the youth. All the arts of corruption which Napoleon exercised towards the dregs of the Revolution, are put in practice by the present ruler upon the *élite* of France: and few are they that resist. Some rushed headlong from the first, and met the bribers half way; others held out for a time, but their virtue failed them as things grew more desperate, and as they grew more hungry. Every man of literary reputation who will sell himself to the government, is gorged with places and loaded with decorations. Every rising young man, of the least promise, is lured and courted to the same dishonourable distinction. Those who resist the seduction must be proof against every temptation which is strongest on a French mind: for the vanity, which is the bad side of the national sociability and love of sympathy, makes the French, of all others, the people who are the most eager for distinction, and as there is no national respect for birth, and but little for wealth, almost the only adventitious distinctions are those which the government can confer. Accordingly the pursuits of intellect, but lately so ardently engaged in, are almost abandoned; no enthusiastic crowds now throng the lecture-room; M. Guizot has left his professor's chair and his historical speculations, and would fain be the Sir

Robert Peel of France; M. Thiers is trying to be the Canning; M. Cousin and M. Villemain have ceased to lecture, have ceased even to publish; M. de Barante is an ambassador; Tanneguy Duchâtel, instead of expounding Ricardo, and making his profound speculations known where they are more needed than in any other country in Europe, became a Minister of Commerce who dared not act upon his own principles, and is waiting to be so again; the press, which so lately teemed with books of history and philosophy, now scarcely produces one, and the young men who could have written them are either placemen or gaping place-hunters, disgusting the well-disposed of all parties by their avidity, and their open defiance of even the pretence of principle.

Carrel was exposed to the same temptations with other young men of talent, but we claim no especial merit for him in having resisted them. Immediately after the Revolution, in which, as already observed, he took a distinguished part, he was sent by the government on an important mission to the West: on his return he found himself gazetted for a prefecture; which at that time he might honestly have accepted, as many others did whom the conduct of the government afterwards forced to retire. Carrel used sportively to say that if he had been offered a regiment, he perhaps could not have found in his heart to refuse. But he declined the prefecture, and took his post as editor and chief writer of the 'National,' which he had founded a few months before the Revolution, in conjunction with MM. Mignet and Thiers, but which M. Thiers had conducted until he and M. Mignet got into place. Carrel now assumed the

management: and from this time his rise was rapid to that place in the eye of the public, which made him, at one period, the most conspicuous private person in France. Never was there an eminence better merited; and we have now to tell how he acquired it, and how he used it.

It was by no trick, no compliance with any prevailing fashion or prejudice, that Carrel became the leading figure in politics on the popular side. It was by the ascendancy of character and talents, legitimately exercised, in a position for which he was more fitted than any other man of his age, and of which he at once entered into the true character, and applied it to its practical use. From this time we are to consider Carrel not as a literary man, but as a politician, and his writings are to be judged by the laws of popular oratory. 'Carrel,' says M. Nisard, 'was a writer, only for want of having an active career fit to occupy all his faculties. He never sought to make himself a name in literature. Writing was to him a means of impressing, under the form of doctrines, his own practical aims upon the minds of those whom he addressed. In his view, the model of a writer was a man of action relating his acts: Cæsar in his Commentaries, Bonaparte in his Memoirs: he held that one ought to write either after having acted, or as a mode of action, when there is no other mode effectual or allowable. At a later period his notion was modified, or rather enlarged;' and he recognised, that there is not only *action* upon the outward world, there is also action upon the spiritual world of thought and feeling, the action of the artist, the preacher, and the

philosopher. 'Thus completed,' says M. Nisard, 'Carrel's idea is the best theory of the art of composition:' as indeed it is; and it was the secret of Carrel's success. 'He who has a passion stronger than the love of literary reputation, and who writes only to inspire others with the same; such a man, proceeding upon the simple idea that the pen should be a mere instrument, will write *well* from the commencement; and if he has *instinct*, which only means, a turn of mind conformable to the genius of his nation, he may become a writer of the first rank, without even considering himself to be a writer.'

Of his eminence as a writer, there is but one opinion in France, there can be but one among competent judges in any country. Already, from the time of his Essays on the War in Spain, 'nothing mediocre had issued from his pen.' In the various papers, literary or political, which he published in different periodical works, 'that quality of painting by words, which had been seen almost with surprise in his articles on Spain, shines forth in nearly every sentence. But let there be no mistake. It was not some art or mystery of *effect* in which Carrel had grown more dexterous; his expression had become more graphic, only because his thoughts had become clearer, of a loftier order, and more completely his own. Like all great writers, he proportions his style to his ideas, and can be simple and unpretending in his language when his thoughts are of a kind which do not require that Reason, to express them, should call in the aid of Imagination. To apply to all things indiscriminately a certain gift of brilliancy

which one is conscious of, and for which one has been praised, is not genius, any more than flinging epigrams about on all occasions is wit.'

'All the qualities,' continues M. Nisard, 'which Carrel possessed from his first taking up the pen, with this additional gift, which came the last, only because there had not before been any sufficient occasion to call it out, burst forth in the polemics of the 'National' with a splendour which to any candid person it must appear hardly possible to exaggerate. For who can be ungrateful to a talent which even those who feared, admired; whether they really feared it less than they pretended, or that in France, people are never so much afraid of talent as to forego the pleasure of admiring it. I shall not hesitate to affirm that from 1831 to 1834, the 'National,' considered merely as a monument of political literature, is the most original production of the nineteenth century.' This from so sober a judge, and in an age and country which has produced Paul Louis Courier, is, we may hope, sufficient.

Both M. Littré and M. Nisard compare Carrel's political writings, as literary productions, to the letters of Junius; though M. Nisard gives greatly the superiority to Carrel. But the comparison itself is an injustice to him. There never was anything less like popular oratory, than those polished but stiff and unnatural productions; where every cadence seems pre-determined, and the writer knew the place of every subsequent word in the sentence, before he finally resolved on the first. The Orations of Demosthenes, though even Demosthenes could not have extemporized them, are but the ideal and unattainable

perfection of extemporaneous speaking: but Apollo himself could not have spoken the Letters of Junius, without pausing at the end of every sentence to arrange the next. A piece of mere painting, like any other work of art, may be finished by a succession of touches: but when spirit speaks to spirit, not in order to please but to incite, everything must seem to come from one impulse, from a soul engrossed for the moment with one feeling. It seemed so with Carrel, because it was so. 'Unlike Paul Louis Courier,' says M. Littré, 'who hesitated at a word, Carrel never hesitated at a sentence;' and he could speak, whenever called upon, in the same style in which he wrote. His style has that breadth, which, in literature, as in other works of art, shows that the artist has a character—that some conceptions and some feelings predominate in his mind over others. Its fundamental quality is that which M. Littré has well characterized, *là sûreté de l'expression:* it goes straight home; the right word is always found, and never seems to be sought: words are never wanting to his thoughts, and never pass before them. '*L'expression*' (we will not spoil by translation M. Littré's finely chosen phraseology) '*arrivait toujours abondante* comme la pensée, si pleine et si abondante elle-même;' 'and if one is not conscious of the labour of a writer retouching carefully every passage, one is conscious of a vigorous inspiration, which endows everything with movement, form, and colour, and *casts in one and the same mould the style and the thought.*'

It would have been in complete contradiction to Carrel's idea of journalism, for the writer to remain behind a curtain. The English idea of a newspaper,

as a sort of impersonal thing, coming from nobody knows where, the readers never thinking of the writer, nor caring whether he thinks what he writes, as long as *they* think what he writes;—this would not have done for Carrel, nor been consistent with his objects. The opposite idea already to some extent prevailed in France; newspapers were often written in, and had occasionally been edited, by political characters, but no political character (since the first Revolution) had *made* itself by a newspaper. Carrel did so. To say that during the years of his management Carrel *conducted* the 'National'—would give an insufficient idea. The 'National' *was* Carrel; it was as much himself as was his conversation, as could have been his speeches in the Chamber, or his acts as a public functionary. 'The National,' says M. Littré, 'was a personification of Armand Carrel; and, if the journal gave expression to the thoughts, the impulses, the passions of the writer, the writer in his turn was always on the breach, prepared to defend, at the peril of his life or of his liberty, what he had said in the journal.'

He never separated himself from his newspaper. He never considered the newspaper one thing and himself another. What was said by a newspaper to a newspaper, he considered as said by a man to a man, and acted accordingly. He never said anything in his paper, to or of any man, which he would not have both dared, and thought it right, to say personally and in his presence. He insisted upon being treated in the same way; and generally was so; though the necessity in which he thought himself of repelling insult, had involved him in two duels before his last fatal one. Where danger was to be incurred in resisting

arbitrary power, he was always the first to seek it: he never hesitated to throw down the gauntlet to the government, challenging it to try upon him any outrage which it was meditating against the liberty or the safety of the citizen. Nor was this a mere bravado; no one will think it so, who knows how unscrupulous are all French governments, how prone to act from irritated vanity more than from calculation, and how likely to commit an imprudence rather than acknowledge a defeat. Carrel thwarted a nefarious attempt of the Périer Ministry to establish the practice of incarcerating writers previously to trial. The thing had been already done in several instances, when Carrel, in a calm and well-reasoned article, which he signed with his name, demonstrated its illegality, and declared that if it was attempted in his own case he would, at the peril of his life, oppose force to force. This produced its effect: the illegality was not repeated; Carrel was prosecuted for his article, pleaded his own cause, and was acquitted; as on every subsequent occasion when the paper was prosecuted and he defended it in person before a jury. The 'National,' often prosecuted, was never condemned but once, when, by a miserable quibble, the cause was taken from the jury to be tried by the court alone; and once again before the Chamber of Peers, an occasion which was made memorable by the spirit with which Carrel spoke out in the face of the tribunal which was sitting to judge him, what all France thinks of one of the most celebrated of its proceedings, the trial and condemnation of Marshal Ney. Nothing on this occasion could have saved Carrel from a heavy fine or a long imprisonment, had

not a member of the Chamber itself, General Excelmans, hurried away by an irresistible impulse, risen in his place, acknowledged the sentiment, and repeated it.

Without these manifestations of spirit and intrepidity, Carrel, however he might have been admired as a writer, could not have acquired his great influence as a man; nor been enabled without imputation on his courage, to keep aloof from the more violent proceedings of his party, and discountenance, as he steadily did, all premature attempts to carry their point by physical force.

Whatever may have been Carrel's individual opinions, he did not, in the 'National,' begin by being a republican; he was willing to give the new chief magistrate a fair trial; nor was it until that personage had quarrelled with Lafayette, driven Dupont de l'Eure and Laffitte from office, and called Casimir Périer to his councils for the avowed purpose of turning back the movement, that Carrel hoisted republican colours. Long before this the symptoms of what was coming had been so evident, as to embitter the last moments of Benjamin Constant, if not, as was generally believed, to shorten his existence. The new oligarchy had declared, both by their words and their deeds, that they had conquered for themselves, and not for the people: and the King had shown his determination that through them he would govern, that he would make himself necessary to them, and be a despot, using them and rewarding them as his tools. It was the position which the King assumed as the head of the oligarchy, which made Carrel a republican. He was no fanatic, to

care about a name, and was too essentially practical in his turn of mind to fight for a mere abstract principle. The object of his declaration of republicanism was a thoroughly practical one—to strike at the ringleader of the opposite party; and, if it were impossible to overthrow him, to do what was possible —to deprive him of the support of opinion.

Events have decided against Carrel, and it is easy, judging after the fact, to pronounce that the position he took up was not a wise one. We do not contend that it was so; but we do contend, that he might think it so, with very little disparagement to his judgment.

On what ground is it that some of the best writers and thinkers, in free countries, have recommended kingly government—have stood up for constitutional royalty as the best form of a free constitution, or at least one which, where it exists, no rational person would wish to disturb? On one ground only, and on one condition:—that a constitutional monarch does not himself govern, does not exercise his own will in governing, but confines himself to appointing responsible ministers, and even in that, does but ascertain and give effect to the national will. When this condition is observed—and it is, on the whole, faithfully observed in our own country—it is asked, and very reasonably, what more could be expected from a republic? and where is the benefit which would be gained by opening the highest office in the State, the only place which carries with it the most tempting part (to common minds) of power, the show of it, as a prize to be scrambled for by every ambitious and turbulent spirit, who is willing to keep the community,

for his benefit, in the mean turmoil of a perpetual canvass? These are the arguments used: they are, in the present state of society, unanswerable; and we should not say a word for Carrel, if the French government bore, or ever had borne, the most distant resemblance to this idea of constitutional royalty. But it never did: no French king ever confined himself within the limits which the best friends of constitutional monarchy allow to be indispensable to its innocuousness: it is always the king, and not his ministers, that governs; and the power of an English king would appear to Louis Philippe a mere mockery of royalty. Now, if the chief functionary was to be his own minister, it appeared to Carrel absolutely necessary that he should be a responsible one. The principle of a responsible executive appeared to him too all-important to be sacrificed. As the king would not content himself with being king, there must, instead of a king, be a removable and accountable magistrate.

As for the *dangers* of a republic, we should carry back our minds to the period which followed the Three Days, and to the impression made on all Europe by the bravery, the integrity, the gentleness and chivalrous generosity, displayed at that time by the populace of Paris—and ask ourselves whether it was inexcusable to have hoped everything from a people, of whom the very lowest ranks could thus act? a people, too, among whom, out of a few large towns, there is little indigence; where almost every peasant has his piece of land, where the number of landed proprietors is more than half the number of grown-up men in the country, and where, by a natural conse-

quence, the respect for the right of property amounts to a superstition? If among such a people there could be danger in republicanism, Carrel saw greater dangers, which could only be averted by republicanism. He saw the whole Continent armed, and ready at a moment's notice to pour into France from all sides. He thought, and it was the principal mistake which he committed, that this collision could not be averted; and he thought, which was no mistake, that if it came, nothing would enable France to bear the brunt of it but that which had carried her through it before, intense popular enthusiasm. This was impossible with Louis Philippe: and if a levy *en masse* was to be again required of all citizens, it must be in a cause which should be worth fighting for, a cause in which all should feel that they had an equal stake.

These were the reasons which made Carrel declare for a republic. They are, no doubt, refuted by the fact, that the public mind was not ripe for a republic, and would not have it. It would have been better, probably, instead of the republican standard, to have raised, as Carrel afterwards did, that of a large parliamentary reform. But the public as yet were still less prepared to join in this demand than in the other. A republic would have brought this among other things, and although, by professing republicanism, there was danger of alarming the timid, there was the advantage of being able to appeal to a feeling already general and deeply rooted, the national aversion to the principle of hereditary privileges. The force of this aversion was clearly seen, when it extorted even from Louis Philippe the abolition of the

hereditary peerage: and in choosing a point of attack which put this feeling on his side, Carrel did not show himself a bad tactician.

Nor was it so clear at that time that the public mind was not ripe. Opinion advances quickly in times of revolution; at the time of which we speak, it had set in rapidly in the direction of what was called 'the movement;' and the manifestation of public feeling at the funeral of General Lamarque, in June 1832, was such, that many competent judges think it must have been yielded to, and the King must have changed his policy, but for the unfortunate collision which occurred on that day between the people and the troops, which produced a conflict that lasted two days, and led to the memorable ordonnance placing Paris under martial law. On this occasion the responsible editor of the 'National' was tried on a capital charge for an article of Carrel's, published just before the conflict, and construed as an instigation to rebellion. He was acquitted not only of the capital, but of the minor offence; and it was proved on the trial, from an official report of General Pajol, the officer in command, that the conflict began on the side of the military, who attacked the people because (as at the funeral of our Queen Caroline) an attempt was made to change the course of the procession, and carry Lamarque's remains to the Pantheon. But, the battle once begun, many known republicans had joined in it; they had fought with desperation, and the blame was generally thrown upon them; from this time the fear of *émeutes* spread among the trading classes, and they rallied round the throne of Louis Philippe.

Though the tide now decidedly turned in favour of the party of resistance, and the moderate opposition headed by M. Odilon Barrot and M. Mauguin lost the greater part of its supporters, the republican opposition continued for some time longer to increase in strength: and Carrel, becoming more and more indisputably at the head of it, rose in influence, and became more and more an object of popular attention.

It was in the autumn of 1833 that we first saw Carrel. He was then at the height of his reputation, and prosperity had shed upon him, as it oftenest does upon the strongest minds, only its best influences. An extract from a letter written not long after will convey in its freshness the impression which he then communicated to an English observer.

'I knew Carrel as the most powerful journalist in France, sole manager of a paper which, while it keeps aloof from all coterie influence, and from the actively revolutionary part of the republican body, has for some time been avowedly republican; and I knew that he was considered a vigorous, energetic man of action, who would always have courage and conduct in an emergency. Knowing thus much of him, I was ushered into the *National* office, where I found six or seven of the innumerable *redacteurs* who belong to a French paper, tall, dark-haired men, with formidable moustaches, and looking fiercely republican. Carrel was not there; and after waiting some time, I was introduced to a slight young man, with extremely polished manners, no moustaches at all, and apparently fitter for a drawing-room than a camp; this was the commander-in-chief of those formidable-looking champions. But it was impossible to be five minutes in his company without

perceiving that he was accustomed to ascendancy, and so accustomed as not to feel it. Instead of the eagerness and impetuosity which one finds in most Frenchmen, his manner is extremely deliberate: without any affectation, he speaks in a sort of measured cadence, and in a manner of which Mr. Carlyle's words, 'quiet emphasis,' are more characteristic than of any man I know; there is the same quiet emphasis in his writings:—a man singularly free, if we may trust appearances, from self-consciousness; simple, graceful, at times almost infantinely playful; and combining perfect self-reliance with the most unaffected modesty; always pursuing a path of his own ('*Je n'aime pas*,' said he to me one day, '*à marcher en troupeau*'), occupying a midway position, facing one way towards the supporters of monarchy and an aristocratic limitation of the suffrage, with whom he will have no compromise, on the other towards the extreme republicans, who have anti-property doctrines, and instead of his United States republic, want a republic after the fashion of the Convention, with something like a dictatorship in their own hands. He calls himself a Conservative Republican (*l'opinion républicaine conservatrice*); not but that he sees plainly that the present constitution of society admits of many improvements, but he thinks they can only take place gradually, or at least that philosophy has not yet matured them; and he would rather hold back than accelerate the political revolution which he thinks inevitable, in order to leave time for ripening those great questions, chiefly affecting the constitution of property and the condition of the working classes, which would press for a solution if a revolution were to take place.

As for himself, he says that he is not *un homme spécial*, that his *métier de journaliste* engrosses him too much to enable him to study, and that he is profoundly ignorant of much upon which he would have to decide if he were in power; and could do nothing but bring together a body genuinely representative of the people, and assist in carrying into execution the dictates of their united wisdom. This is modest enough in the man who would certainly be President of the Republic, if there were a republic within five years, and the extreme party did not get the upper hand. He seems to know well what he does know: I have met with no such views of the French Revolution in any book, as I have heard from him.'

This is a first impression, but it was confirmed by all that we afterwards saw and learnt. Of all distinguished Frenchmen whom we have known, Carrel, in manner, answered most to Coleridge's definition of the manner of a gentleman, that which shows respect to others in such a way as implies an equally habitual and secure reliance on their respect to himself. Carrel's manner was not of the self-asserting kind, like that of many of the most high-bred Frenchmen, who succeed perfectly in producing the effect they desire, but who seem to be desiring it: Carrel seemed never to concern himself about it, but to trust to what he was, for what he would appear to be. This had not always been the case; and we learn from M. Nisard, that in the time of his youth and obscurity he was sensitive as to the consideration shown him, and susceptible of offence. It was not in this only that he was made better by being better appreciated. Unlike vulgar minds, whose faults, says M. Nisard,

'augment in proportion as their talents obtain them indulgence, it was evident to all his friends that his faults diminished, in proportion as his brilliant qualities, and the celebrity they gave him, increased.'

One of the qualities which we were most struck with in Carrel was his modesty. It was not that common modesty, which is but the negation of arrogance and overweening pretension. It was the higher quality, of which that is but a small part. It was the modesty of one who knows accurately what he is, and what he is equal to, never attempts anything which requires qualities that he has not, and admires and values no less, and more if it be reasonable to do so, the things which he cannot do, than those which he can. It was most unaffectedly that he disclaimed all mastery of the details of politics. I understand, he said, the principles of a representative government. But he said, and we believe him to have sincerely thought, that when once a genuinely representative legislature should have been assembled, his function would be at an end. It would belong to more instructed men, he thought, to make laws for France; he could at most be of use in defending her from attack, and in making her laws obeyed. In this Carrel did himself less than justice, for though he was not, as he truly said, *un homme spécial*, though he had not profoundly studied political economy or jurisprudence, no man ever had a greater gift of attaching to himself men of special acquirements, or could discern more surely what man was fit for what thing. And that is the exact quality wanted in the head of an administration. Like Mirabeau, Carrel had a natural gift for being Prime Minister; like Mirabeau, he could make

men of all sorts, even foreigners, and men who did not think themselves inferior to him but only different, feel that they could have been loyal to him—that they could have served and followed him in life and death, and marched under his orders wherever he chose to lead: sure, with him, of being held worth whatever they were worth, of having their counsels listened to by an ear capable of appreciating them, of having the post assigned to them for which they were fittest, and a commander to whom they could trust for bringing them off in any embarrassment in which he could ever engage them.

Shortly after we first knew Carrel, we had an opportunity of judging him in one of the most trying situations in which the leading organ of a movement party could be placed; and the manner in which he conducted himself in it, gave us the exalted idea which we never afterwards lost, both of his nobleness of character, and of his eminent talents as a political leader.

A small and extreme section of the republican body, composed of men, some of them highly accomplished, many of them pure in purpose and full of courage and enthusiasm, but without that practicalness which distinguished Carrel,—more highly endowed with talent for action, than with judgment for it,—had formed themselves into a society, which placed itself in communication with the discontented of the labouring classes, and got under their command the greater part of the insurrectionary strength of the party.*

* The following extract from the letter already quoted, contains a picture of one of the most remarkable of these men. We have no reason to believe that he is a specimen of the rest, for he is as completely an individual as

These men raised the cry of social reform, and a modification of the constitution of property,—ideas which the St. Simonians had set afloat, in connexion with a definite scheme, and with speculative views the most enlarged, and in several respects the most just, that had ever been connected with Utopianism. But these republicans had no definite plan; the ideas were comparatively vague and indeterminate in their minds, yet were sincerely entertained, and did not, whatever ignorant or cowardly persons might suppose, mean plunder for themselves and their associates. The Society published a manifesto, in which these aspira-

Carrel:—'A man whose name is energy; who cannot ask you the commonest question but in so decided a manner that he makes you start: who impresses you with a sense of irresistible power and indomitable will; you might fancy him an incarnation of Satan, if he were your enemy or the enemy of your party, and if you had not associated with him and seen how full of sweetness and amiableness and gentleness he is. . . . . His notion of duty is that of a Stoic; he conceives it as something quite infinite, and having nothing whatever to do with happiness, something immeasurably above it: a kind of half Manichean in his views of the universe: according to him, man's life consists of one perennial and intense struggle against the principle of evil, which but for that struggle would wholly overwhelm him: generation after generation carries on this battle, with little success as yet; he believes in perfectibility and progressiveness, but thinks that hitherto progress has consisted only in removing some of the impediments to good, not in realizing the good itself: that, nevertheless, the only satisfaction which man can realize for himself is in battling with this evil principle, and overpowering it; that after evils have accumulated for centuries, there sometimes comes one great clearing-off, one day of reckoning called a revolution: that it is only on such rare occasions, very rarely indeed on any others, that good men get into power, and then they ought to seize the opportunity for doing all they can: that any government which is boldly attacked, by ever so small a minority, may be overthrown, and that is his hope with respect to the present government. He is much more accomplished than most of the political men I have seen; has a wider range of ideas, converses on art, and most subjects of general interest: always throwing all he has to say into a few brief energetic sentences, as if it was contrary to his nature to expend one superfluous word.'

There can be no indelicacy in now saying, that the original of this picture was Godefroi Cavaignac.

tions were dimly visible, and in which they reprinted, with their adhesion, a Declaration of the Rights of Man, proposed by Robespierre in the National Convention, and by that body rejected. This document was harmless enough, and we could not see in it any of the anti-property doctrines that appeared to be seen by everybody else, for Paris was convulsed with apprehension on the subject. But whether it was the name of Robespierre, or the kind of superstition which attaches to the idea of property in France, or that the manifesto was considered a preliminary to worse things supposed to be meditated by its authors, the alarm of the middle classes was now thoroughly excited: they became willing to join with any men and any measures, in order to put down not only this, but every other kind of republicanism; and from this time, in reality, dates the passionate resistance to the democratic movement, which, with the assistance of Fieschi, was *improved* into the laws of September 1835, by which laws, and by the imprisonment and exile of its most active members, the republican party has been for the present silenced.

The conduct by which the prospects of the popular party were thus compromised, Carrel had from the first disapproved. The constitution of property appeared to him a subject for speculative philosophers, not for the mass: he did not think that the present idea of property, and the present arrangements of it, would last for ever unchanged, through the progressive changes of society and civilization; but he believed that any improvement of them would be the work of a generation, and not of an hour. Against the other peculiar views of this revolutionary party

he had combated both in private and in the 'National.' He had taken no part in their projects for arriving at a republic by an insurrection. He had set his face against their notion of governing by an active minority, for the good of the majority, but if necessary in opposition to its will, and by a provisional despotism that was to terminate some day in a free government. A free, full, and fair representation of the people was his object; full opportunity to the nation to declare its will—the perfect submission of individual crotchets to that will. And without condemning the Republic of the Convention under the extraordinary circumstances which accompanied its brief career, he preferred to cite as an example the Republic of the United States; not that he thought it perfect, nor even a model which France ought in all respects to imitate, but because it presented or seemed to present to France an example of what she most wanted,—protection to all parties alike, limitation of the power of the magistrate, and fairness as between the majority and the minority.

In the newspaper warfare, of an unusually vehement character, stirred up by the manifesto of the revolutionary republicans, Carrel was the last of the journalists to declare himself. He took some days to consider what position it most became him to assume. He did not agree in the conclusions of this party, while he had just enough of their premises in common with them, to expose him to misrepresentation. It was incumbent on him, to rescue himself, and the great majority of the popular party, from responsibility for opinions which they did not share, and the imputation of which was calculated to do them

so much injury. On the other hand, the party could not afford to lose these able and energetic men, and the support of that portion of the working classes who had given their confidence to them. The men, too, were many of them his friends; he knew them to be good men, superior men, men who were an honour to their opinions, and he could not brook the cowardice of letting them be run down by a popular cry. After mature deliberation, he published in the 'National' a series of articles, admirable for their nobleness of feeling and delicacy and dexterity in expression: in which, without a single subterfuge, without deviating in a word from the most open and straightforward sincerity, he probed the question to the bottom, and contrived with the most exquisite address, completely to separate himself from all that was objectionable in the opinions of the manifesto, and at the same time to present both the opinions and the men in the most advantageous light, in which, without disguising his disagreement, it was possible to place them. These were triumphs which belonged only to Carrel; it was on such occasions that he showed, though in a bloodless field, the qualities of a consummate general.

In the deliberations of the republican party among themselves, Carrel was more explicit. The society which issued the manifesto, and which was called the Society of the Rights of Man, made an overture to a larger society, that for the Protection of the Liberty of the Press, which represented all the shades of republicanism, and invited them to adopt the manifesto. The committee or council of the association was convened to take the proposal into consideration:

and Carrel, though on ordinary occasions he absented himself from the proceedings of such bodies, attended. At this deliberation we had the good fortune to be present, and we shall never forget the impression we received of the talents both of Carrel and of the leader of the more extreme party, M. Cavaignac. Carrel displayed the same powerful good sense, and the same spirit of conciliation, in discussing with that party his differences from them, which he had shown in his apology for them to the public. With the superiority of a really comprehensive mind, he placed himself at their point of view; laid down, in more express and bolder terms than they had done themselves, and in a manner which startled men who were esteemed to go much farther than Carrel, the portion of philosophic truth which there was in the premises from which they had drawn their erroneous conclusions; and left them less dissatisfied than pleased, that one who differed from them so widely, agreed with them in so much more than they expected, and could so powerfully advocate a portion of their views. The result was that Carrel was chosen to draw up a report to the society, on the manifesto, and on the invitation to adopt it. His report, in which he utters his whole mind on the new ideas of social reform considered in reference to practice, remained unpublished: Carrel did not proclaim unnecessarily to the world the differences in his own party, but preferred the prudent maxim of Napoleon, *il faut laver notre linge sale chez nous*. But at a later period, when the chiefs of the extreme party were in prison or in banishment, the republican cause for the present manifestly lost, himself publicly calumniated (for from what calumny

is he sacred whom a government detests!) as having indirectly instigated the Fieschi atrocity, and his house searched for papers on pretence of ascertaining if he was concerned in it, which the cowardly hypocrites who sought to involve him in the odium never themselves even in imagination conceived to be possible; at this time, when no one could any longer be injured by setting his past conduct in its true light, Carrel published his Report on the Robespierre Manifesto: and under the title of *Extrait du dossier d'un prévenu de complicité morale dans l'attentat du* 28 *Juillet*, it subsists for any one to read, a monument at once of the far-sighted intellect of Carrel, and of his admirable skill in expression.

During the rapid decline of the republican party, we know little of what passed in Carrel's mind; but our knowledge of him would have led us to surmise what M. Nisard states to be the fact, that he became sensible of the hopelessness of the cause, and only did not abandon the advocacy of it as an immediate object, from a sense of what was due to the consistency which a public man is bound to maintain before the public, when it is the sacrifice of his interest only, and not of his honesty, that it requires of him; and of what was due to the simple-minded men whom he had helped to compromise, and whose whole stay and support, the faith which kept them honest men, and which saved them from despair, would have expired within them if Carrel had deserted them. As is beautifully said by M. Nisard, 'to resist your better judgment; never to give way, nor allow your misgivings to become visible; to stand firm to principles proclaimed at some critical moment, though

they were no more than sudden impressions or rash hopes which impatience converted into principles; not to abandon simple and ardent minds in the path in which you have yourself engaged them, and to whom it is all in all; purposely to repress your doubts and hesitations, and coldly to call down upon your own head fruitless and premature perils, in a cause in which you are no longer enthusiastic, in order to keep up the confidence of your followers: such is the price which must be paid for being the acknowledged chief of an opinion at war with an established government:—to do this, and to do it so gracefully and unostentatiously, that those who recognise you as their chief shall pardon you your superiority to them; and with a talent so out of comparison, that no self-love in the party you represent, can conceive the idea of equalling you. During more than four years, such was the task Carrel had to fulfil—and he fulfilled it: never for a single moment did he fall below his position. He never incited those whom he was not resolved to follow; and in many cases where the impulse had been given not by him, but against his judgment, he placed himself at the head of those whom he had not instigated. The same man whose modesty in ordinary circumstances allowed the title of chief of the republican opinion to be disputed to him, seized upon it in time of danger as a sign by which the stroke of the enemy might be directed to him. He was like a general who, having by his courage and talents advanced to the first rank of the army, allows his merits to be contested in the jealousies and gossipings of the barrack, but in

a desperate affair assumes the command in chief by the right of the bravest and most able.'

The doubts and misgivings, however, which Carrel is stated to have so painfully experienced, never affected the truth of his republican principles, but at most their immediate applicability. The very foundation of Carrel's character was sincerity and singleness of purpose; and nothing would have induced him to continue professing to others, convictions which he had ceased to entertain.

While Carrel never abandoned republicanism, it necessarily, after the laws of September, ceased to be so prominent as before in his journal. He felt the necessity of rallying under one standard all who were agreed in the essential point, opposition to the oligarchy; and he was one of the most earnest in demanding an extension of the suffrage; that vital point, the all-importance of which France has been so slow to recognise, and which it is so much to be regretted that he had not chosen from the first, instead of republicanism, to be the immediate aim of his political life.

But the greatest disappointment which Carrel suffered was the defeat not of republicanism, but of what M. Nisard calls his '*théorie du droit commun;*' those ideas of moderation in victory, of respect for the law, and for the rights of the weaker party, so much more wanted in France than any political improvements which are possible where those ideas are not.

'I affirm,' says M. Nisard, 'that I have never seen him in real bitterness of heart, but for what he had to suffer on this point; and on this subject alone his

disenchantment was distressing. His good sense, the years he had before him, the chapter of accidents, would have given him patience as to his own prospects, but nothing could console him for seeing that noble scheme of reciprocal forbearance compromised, and thrown back into the class of doctrines for ever disputable—by all parties equally; by the government, by the country, and by his own friends. *There*, in fact, was the highest and truest inspiration of his good sense, the most genuine instinct of his generous nature. All Carrel was in that doctrine. Never would he have proved false to that noble emanation of his intellect and of his heart. . . . The Revolution of July, so extraordinary among revolutions from the spectacle of a people leaving the vanquished at full liberty to inveigh against and even to ridicule the victory, gave ground to hope for a striking and definitive return to the principle of equal law. Carrel made himself the organ of this hope, and the theorist of this doctrine. He treated the question with the vigour and clearness which were usual with him. He opposed to the examples, so numerous in the last fifty years, of governments which successively perished by overstraining their powers, the idea of a government offering securities to all parties against its own lawful and necessary instinct of self-preservation. He invoked practical reasons exclusively, denying himself rigidly the innocent aid of all the language of passion, not to expose his noble theory to the ironical designation of Utopianism. It was these views which gave Carrel so many friends in all parts of France, and in all places where the 'National' penetrated. There is, apart from all political parties, a party composed of

all those who are either kept by circumstances out of the active sphere of politics, or who are too enlightened to fling themselves into it in the train of a leader who is only recommended by successes in parliament or in the press. How many men, weary of disputes about forms of government—incredulous even to Carrel's admirable apologies for the American system — quitting the shadow for the substance, ranged themselves under that banner of equal justice which Carrel had raised, and to which he would have adhered at the expense, if necessary, even of his individual opinions. Testimonies of adhesion came in to him from all quarters, which for a moment satisfied his utmost wishes: and I saw him resigning himself to be, for an indeterminate period, the first speculative writer of his country. But errors in which all parties had their share, soon cooled him. It was a severe shock. Carrel had faith in these generous views; he had adopted them with stronger conviction perhaps than his republican theories, to which he had committed himself hastily, and under the influence of temporary events rather than of quiet and deliberate meditations. . . . It is more painful surely to a generous mind to doubt the possibility of a generous policy, than to the leader of a party to doubt that his opinions have a chance of prevailing: Carrel had both disappointments at once.

'The affliction of Carrel was irreparable from the moment when he remained the sole defender of the common rights of all, between the nation which from fear made a sacrifice of them to the government, and his own party, which cherished secretly thoughts inconsistent with them. We had a long conversation

on the subject a few months before his death, in a walk in the Bois de Boulogne. I perceived that he had almost renounced his doctrine as a principle capable of present application: he at most adhered to it as a Utopia, from pure generosity, and perhaps also from the feeling of his own strength. Carrel believed that if his party came into power, he would have the force to resist the temptation of arbitrary authority, and not to accept it even from the hands of a majority offering it to him in the name of his country. But a cause deferred was to him a lost cause. His doubts were equivalent to a defeat. Though this principle was the most disinterested conviction of his mind and the best impulse of his heart, the theories of men of action always imply in their own minds the hope of a prompt reduction to practice. From the moment when his doctrine failed as a practicable policy, it could no longer be a doctrine for him. Towards the end of his life he spoke of it only as a result of the progress of improvement, which it would not be his fate to live to see, and which perhaps would never be arrived at.'

We can conceive few things more melancholy than the spectacle of one of the noblest men in France, if not the noblest, dying convinced against his will, that his country is incapable of freedom; and under whatsoever institutions, has only the choice, what man or what party it will be under the despotism of. But we have not Carrel's deliberate opinion; we have but his feelings in the first agony of his disenchantment. That multitude of impartial men in all quarters of France, who responded for a short time so cordially to his voice, will again claim the liberties which, in a

moment of panic, they have surrendered to a government they neither love nor respect, and which they submit to and even support against its enemies, solely in despair of a better.

But Carrel was not one of those whom disappointment paralyzes; unsuccessful in one worthy object, he always found another. The newspaper press, gagged by the September laws, no longer afforded him the same instrument of power, and he meditated a total or partial retirement from it, either to recruit himself by study, *se retremper par l'étude*, for which, even at an earlier period, he had expressed to us an earnest longing, or to write what he had for some time had in view, the History of Napoleon. But he would have been called from these pursuits into a more active life; at the impending general election, he would have been chosen a deputy; having already been once put up without his knowledge, and defeated only by one vote. What course he would have struck out for himself in the Chamber, we shall never know, but it is not possible to doubt that it would have been an original one, and that it would have been brilliant, and most beneficial to his country. So immensely the superior of all his rivals in the qualities which create influence, he would probably have drawn round him by degrees all the sections of the popular party; would have given, if any one could, unity, decision, and definiteness to their vague plans and divided counsels; and the destiny which he could not conquer for himself as President of a Republic, he might one day have gloriously fulfilled as minister under a reformed legislature, if any such reform could in France (which he regarded as impossible) render

royalty compatible with the prevalence of the popular interest. These are vain dreams now; but the time was, when it was not foolish to indulge in them. Such dreams were the comfort of those who knew him, and who knew how ill his country can supply his place. He was at once the Achilles and the Ulysses of the democratic party: and the star of hope for France in any new convulsions, was extinguished when Carrel died.

It is bitter to lose such a man; bitterest of all to lose him in a miserable duel. But ill shall it fare with the government which can rejoice in the death of such an enemy, and the time may come when it would give its most precious treasures to recal from the grave the victim whom, whether intentionally on its part or not, its enmity has sent thither. The heir to the French throne is reported to have said of Carrel's death, that it was a loss to all parties; he, at least, will probably live to find it so. Such a government as that now existing in France cannot last; and whether it end peacefully or violently, whether the return tide of public opinion shall bear the present reigning family aloft on its surface, or whelm them in its depths, bitterly will that man be missed, who alone, perhaps, would have been capable of saying to that tremendous power, Thus far shalt thou go, and no farther. There are in France philosophers superior to Carrel, but no man known by such past services, equal like him to the great practical questions which are coming, and whose whole nature and character speak out like his, to the best qualities and noblest sympathies of the French mind. He had all that was necessary to give him an advocate in every French

breast, and to make all young and ardent Frenchmen see in him the ideal of their own aspirations, the expression of what in their best moments they would wish to be.

His death is not to be confounded with the vulgar deaths of those who, hemmed in between two cowardices, can resist the fear of death, but not the meaner fear of the tongues of their fellow-creatures. His duel was a consequence of the system which he adopted for repelling the insults to which, as a journalist identifying himself with his journal, he was peculiarly exposed; and which, not only for his influence as a public man, but for the respectability of the press, and for preserving that high tone of public discussion from which he himself never swerved, he thought it necessary not to pass unpunished. His system, alas! is sufficiently refuted by its having cost so precious a life: but it *was* his system. 'He often repeated,' says M. Littré, 'that the 'National' had no *procureur du roi* to defend it, and that it must be its own defender. He was persuaded, too, that nothing gives more food to political enmities, or renders them more capable of reaching the last excesses, than the impunity of calumny: he contended that the men of the Revolution had prepared their own scaffold by not imposing silence on their defamers: and had it been necessary for him to expose himself even more than he did, he never would have suffered, in whatever situation he might have been placed, that his name and character should with impunity be trifled with. This was his answer when he was blamed for risking his life too readily; and now, when he has fallen, it is fit, in defending his memory from a

reproach which grief has wrung from persons who loved him, to recal the words he uttered on his death-bed: 'The standard-bearer of the regiment is always the most exposed.''

He died a martyr to the morality and dignity of public discussion: and though even that cause would have been far better served by his life than by such a death, he was the victim of his virtues, and of that low state of our civilization, after all our boasting, which has not yet contrived the means of giving to a man whose reputation is important to him, protection against insult, but leaves him to seek reparation sword in hand, as in the barbarous ages. While he lived, he did keep up in the press generally, something of that elevation of tone which distinguished it under the Restoration, but which, in the *débordement* of political and literary profligacy since the Revolution of 1830, it had become difficult to preserve: and all we know of the state of newspaper discussion since his death, exalts our sense of the moral influence which Carrel exercised over the press of France.

Carrel was of middle height, slightly made, and very graceful. Like most persons of really fine faculties, he carried those faculties with him into the smallest things; and did not disdain to excel, being qualified to do so, in things which are great only to little men. Even in the details of personal equipments, his taste was watched for and followed by the amateurs of such matters. He was fond of all bodily exercises, and had, says M. Nisard, *un peu de tous les goûts vifs*, more or less of all strong and natural inclinations; as might be expected from his large and

vigorous human nature, the foundation of strength of will, and which, combined with intellect and with goodness, constitutes greatness. He was a human being complete at all points, not a fraction or *frustum* of one.

'The distinctive feature of his character,' says M. Nisard, 'was his unbounded generosity. In whatever sense we understand that word, whether it mean the impulse of a man who devotes himself, or merely pecuniary liberality, the life of Carrel gives occasion for applying it in all its meanings. All the actions of his public life are marked with the former kind of generosity. His errors were generally acts of generosity ill-calculated. As for pecuniary generosity, no one had it more, or of a better sort. Carrel could neither refuse, nor give little.' There are stories told of him like those told of Goldsmith, or any other person of thoughtless generosity. As is often the case with persons of strong impulses, he was of a careless character when not under excitement, and his inattention sometimes caused inconvenience to himself, and made him give unintentional offence to others. But on occasions which called into action his strong will, he had the eye of an eagle: 'he seized with a glance, as on a field of battle, the whole *terrain* on which he was placed; and astonished above all by the sureness of the instinct with which he divined the significance of small things. Small things,' continues M. Littré, 'are those which the vulgar do not perceive; but when such things have produced serious effects, pause, quite disconcerted, before the irrevocable event which might so easily have been prevented.'

His conversation, especially on political subjects, M. Nisard, comparing him with the best conversers in a country where the art of conversation is far more cultivated than it is here, declares to be the most perfect he ever heard: and we can add our testimony to his, that Carrel's writings in the 'National' seemed but the continuation of his conversation. He was fond of showing that he could do equal justice to all sides of a question: and he would 'take up a government newspaper, or one of a more moderate opposition than his own, and reading the article of the day, he would adopt its idea, and complete it or develop it in the spirit of the opinions which had inspired it. At other times he would in the same way recompose the speeches in the Chamber. 'They have not given,' he would say, 'the best reasons for their opinions; *this* would have been more specious, and would have embarrassed us more.' His facility was prodigious. And the reasons he gave were not rhetorical fallacies, but just arguments. They embodied all that could be said truly and honourably on that side of the question. By this he demonstrated two of his qualities, vastly superior to mere facility in arguing for the sake of argument: on the one hand, his knowledge of the interests of all parties; on the other, his real esteem for what was just in the views most opposite to his own.'

We have marked these traits of character, because they help to complete the picture of what Carrel was, and, while they give reality to our conception of him, and bring him home to the feelings as a being of our own flesh and blood, they all give additional insight into those great qualities which it is the object of this

paper to commemorate. The mind needs such examples, to keep alive in it that faith in good, without which nothing worthy the name of good can ever be realized: it needs to be reminded by them that (as is often repeated by one of the greatest writers of our time) man is still man. Whatever man has been, man may be; whatever of heroic the heroic ages, whatever of chivalrous the romantic ages have produced, is still possible, nay, still *is*, and a hero of Plutarch may exist amidst all the pettinesses of modern civilization, and with all the cultivation and refinement, and the analyzing and questioning spirit of the modern European mind. The lives of those are not lost, who have lived enough to be an example to the world; and though his country will not reap the blessings his life might have conferred upon it, yet while the six years following the Revolution of 1830 shall have a place in history, the memory of Armand Carrel will not utterly perish.

'Si quis piorum manibus locus; si, ut sapientibus placet, non cum corpore extinguuntur magnæ animæ; placidè quiescas, nosque ab infirmo desiderio et muliebribus lamentis ad contemplationem virtutum tuarum voces, quas neque lugeri, neque plangi fas est: admiratione te potiùs, et immortalibus laudibus, et si natura suppeditet, similitudine decorabimus.'

A PROPHECY.

(From a Review of 'Letters from Palmyra.'*)

THE time was, when it was thought that the best and most appropriate office of fictitious narrative was to awaken high aspirations, by the representation in interesting circumstances, of characters conformable indeed to human nature, but whose actions and sentiments were of a more generous and loftier cast than are ordinarily to be met with by everybody in every-day life. But nowadays nature and probability are thought to be violated, if there be shown to the reader, in the personages with whom he is called upon to sympathize, characters on a larger scale than himself, or than the persons he is accustomed to meet at a dinner or a quadrille party. Yet, from such representations, familiar from early youth, have not only the noblest minds in modern Europe derived much of what made them noble, but even the commoner spirits what made them understand and respond to nobleness. And *this* is education. It would be well if the more narrow-minded portion, both of the religious and of the scientific education-mongers, would consider whether the books which they are banishing from the hands of youth, were not instruments of national education to the full as powerful as the catalogues of

* *London and Westminster Review*, January 1838.

physical facts and theological dogmas which they have substituted—as if science and religion were to be taught, not by imbuing the mind with their spirit, but by cramming the memory with summaries of their conclusions. Not what a boy or a girl can repeat by rote, but what they have learnt to love and admire, is what forms their character. The chivalrous spirit has almost disappeared from books of education; the popular novels of the day teach nothing but (what is already too soon learnt from actual life) lessons of worldliness, with at most the huckstering virtues which conduce to getting on in the world; and for the first time perhaps in history, the youth of both sexes of the educated classes are universally growing up unromantic. What will come in mature age from such a youth, the world has not yet had time to see. But the world may rely upon it, that Catechisms, whether Pinnock's or the Church of England's, will be found a poor substitute for those old romances, whether of chivalry or of faëry, which, if they did not give a true picture of actual life, did not give a false one, since they did not profess to give any, but (what was much better) filled the youthful imagination with pictures of heroic men, and of what are at least as much wanted, heroic women. The book before us does this: and greatly is any book to be valued, which in this age, and in a form suited to it, does its part towards keeping alive the chivalrous spirit, which was the best part of the old romances; towards giving to the aspirations of the young and susceptible a noble direction, and keeping present to the mind an exalted standard of worth, by placing before it heroes and heroines worthy of the name.

It is an additional title to praise in this author, that his great women are imagined in the very contrary spirit to the modern cant, according to which an heroic woman is supposed to be something intrinsically different from the best sort of heroic men. It was not so thought in the days of Artemisia or Zenobia, or in that era of great statesmen and stateswomen, the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, when the daughters of royal houses were governors of provinces, and displayed, as such, talents for command equal to any of their husbands or brothers; and when negotiations which had baffled the first diplomatists of Francis and of Charles V. were brought to a successful issue by the wisdom and dexterity of two princesses. The book before us is in every line a virtual protest against the narrow and degrading doctrine which has grown out of the false refinement of later times. And it is the author's avowed belief, that one of the innumerable great purposes of Christianity was to abolish the distinction between the two characters, by teaching that neither of them can be really admirable without the qualities supposed to be distinctive of the other, and by exhibiting, in the person of its Divine Founder, an equally perfect model of both.

WRITINGS OF ALFRED DE VIGNY.*

IN the French mind (the most active national mind in Europe at the present moment) one of the most stirring elements, and among the fullest of promise for the futurity of France and of the world, is the Royalist, or Carlist, ingredient. We are not now alluding to the attempts of M. de Genoude, and that portion of the Carlist party of which the 'Gazette de France' is the organ, to effect an alliance between legitimacy and universal suffrage; nor to the eloquent anathemas hurled against the existing institutions of society by a man of a far superior order, the Abbé de la Mennais, whose original fervour of Roman Catholic absolutism has given place to a no less fervour of Roman Catholic ultra-Radicalism. These things too have their importance as symptoms, and even intrinsically are not altogether without their value. But we would speak rather of the somewhat less obvious inward working, which (ever since the Revolution of 1830 annihilated the Carlist party as a power in the State) has been going on in the minds of that accomplished and numerous portion of the educated youth

* Consisting of—1. Souvenirs de Servitude et de Grandeur Militaire. 2. Cinq-Mars; ou, une Conjuration sous Louis XIII. 3. Stello; ou, les Consultations du Docteur Noir. 4. Poëmes. 5. Le More de Venise, tragédie traduite de Shakespeare en Vers Français. 6. La Maréchale d'Ancre, drame. 7. Chatterton, drame.—*London and Westminster Review*, April 1838.

of France, whose family connexions or early mental impressions ranked them with the defeated party; who had been brought up, as far as the age permitted, in the old ideas of monarchical and Catholic France; were allied by their feelings or imaginations with whatever of great and heroic those old ideas had produced in the past; had not been sullied by participation in the selfish struggles for Court favour and power, of which the same ideas were the pretext in the present—and to whom the Three Days were really the destruction of something which they had loved and revered, if not for itself, at least for the reminiscences associated with it.

These reflections present themselves naturally when we are about to speak of the writings of Alfred de Vigny, one of the earliest in date, and one of the most genuine, true-hearted, and irreproachable in tendency and spirit, of the new school of French literature, termed the romantic. It would, in fact, be impossible to understand M. de Vigny's writings, especially the later and better portion, or to enter sympathizingly into the peculiar feelings which pervade them, without this clue. M. de Vigny is, in poetry and art, as a still more eminent man, M. de Tocqueville, is in philosophy, a result of the influences of the age upon a mind and character trained up in opinions and feelings opposed to those of the age. Both these writers, educated in one set of views of life and society, found, when they attained manhood, another set predominant in the world they lived in, and, at length, after 1830, enthroned in its high places. The contradictions they had thus to reconcile—the doubts and perplexities and misgivings which they had to

find the means of overcoming before they could see clearly between these cross-lights—were to them that, for want of which so many otherwise well-educated and naturally-gifted persons grow up hopelessly commonplace. To go through life with a set of opinions ready-made and provided for saving them the trouble of thought, was a destiny that could not be theirs. Unable to satisfy themselves with either of the conflicting formulas which were given them for the interpretation of what lay in the world before them, they learnt to take formulas for what they were worth, and to look into the world itself for the philosophy of it. They looked with both their eyes, and saw much there, which was neither in the creed they had been taught, nor in that which they found prevailing around them: much that the prejudices, either of Liberalism or of Royalism, amounted to a disqualification for the perception of, and which would have been hid from themselves if the atmosphere of either had surrounded them both in their youth and in their maturer years.

That this conflict between a Royalist education, and the spirit of the modern world, triumphant in July 1830, must have gone for something in giving to the speculations of a philosopher like M. de Tocqueville the catholic spirit and comprehensive range which distinguish them, most people will readily admit. But, that the same causes must have exerted an analogous influence over a poet and artist, such as Alfred de Vigny is in his degree; that a political revolution can have given to the genius of a poet what principally distinguishes it—may not appear so obvious, at least to those who, like most Englishmen, rarely

enter into either politics or poetry with their whole soul. Worldly advancement, or religion, are an Englishman's real interests: for Politics, except in connexion with one of those two objects, and for Art, he keeps only bye-corners of his mind, which naturally are far apart from each other: and it is but a small minority among Englishmen who can comprehend, that there are nations among whom Politics, or the pursuit of social well-being, and Poetry, or the love of beauty and of imaginative emotion, are passions as intense, as absorbing—influencing as much the whole tendencies of the character, and constituting as large a part of the objects in life of a considerable portion of the cultivated classes, as either the religious feelings, or those of worldly interest. Where both politics and poetry, instead of being either a trade or a pastime, are taken completely *au sérieux*, each will be more or less coloured by the other; and that close relation between an author's politics and his poetry, which with us is only seen in the great poetic figures of their age, a Shelley, a Byron, or a Wordsworth, is broadly conspicuous in France (for example), through the whole range of her literature.

It may be worth while to employ a moment in considering what are the general features which, in an age of revolutions, may be expected to distinguish a Royalist or Conservative from a Liberal or Radical poet or imaginative writer. We are not speaking of political poetry, of Tyrtæus or Körner, of Corn-Law Rhymes, or sonnets on the Vaudois or on Zaragoza; these are rather oratory than poetry. We have nothing to do with the Radical poet as the scourge of the oppressor, or with the Tory one as the denouncer of

infidelity or jacobinism. They are not poets by virtue of what is negative or combative in their feelings, but by what is positive and sympathizing. The pervading spirit, then, of the one, will be love of the Past; of the other, faith in the Future. The partialities of the one will be towards things established, settled, regulated; of the other, towards human free-will, cramped and fettered in all directions, both for good and ill, by those establishments and regulations. Both, being poets, will have a heroic sympathy with heroism; but the one will respond most readily to the heroism of endurance and self-control, the other to that of action and struggle. Of the virtues and beauties of our common humanity, the one will view with most affection those which have their natural growth under the shelter of fixed habits and firmly settled opinions: local and family attachments, tranquil tastes and pleasures, those gentle and placid feelings towards man and nature, ever most easy to those upon whom is not imposed the burthen of being their own protectors and their own guides. Greater reverence, deeper humility, the virtues of abnegation and forbearance carried to a higher degree, will distinguish his favourite personages: while, as subjection to a common faith and law brings the most diverse characters to the same standard, and tends more or less to efface their differences, a certain monotony of goodness will be apparent, and a degree of distaste for *prononcé* characters, as being nearly allied to ill-regulated ones. The sympathies of the Radical or Movement poet will take the opposite direction. Active qualities are what he will demand, rather than passive; those which fit persons for making changes

in the circumstances which surround them, rather than for accommodating themselves to those circumstances. Sensible he must of course be of the necessity of restraints, but since he is dissatisfied with those which exist, his dislike of established opinions and institutions turns naturally into sympathy with all things, not in themselves bad, which those opinions and institutions restrain, that is, with all natural human feelings. Free and vigorous developments of human nature, even when he cannot refuse them his disapprobation, will command his sympathy: a more marked individuality will usually be conspicuous in his creations; his heroic characters will be all armed for conflict, full of energy and strong self-will, of grand conceptions and brilliant virtues, but, in habits of virtue, often below those of the Conservative school: there will not be so broad and black a line between his good and bad personages; his characters of principle will be more tolerant of his characters of mere passion. Among human affections, the Conservative poet will give the preference to those which can be invested with the character of duties; to those of which the objects are as it were marked out by the arrangements either of nature or of society, we ourselves exercising no choice: as the parental—the filial—the conjugal after the irrevocable union, or a solemn betrothment equivalent to it, and with due observance of all decencies, both real and conventional. The other will delight in painting the affections which choose their own objects, especially the most powerful of these, passionate love; and of that, the more vehement oftener than the more graceful aspects; will select by preference its subtlest workings, and its

most unusual and unconventional forms; will show it at war with the forms and customs of society, nay even with its laws and its religion, if the laws and tenets which regulate that branch of human relations are among those which have begun to be murmured against. By the Conservative, feelings and states of mind which he disapproves will be indicated rather than painted; to lay open the morbid anatomy of human nature will appear to him contrary to good taste always, and often to morality: and inasmuch as feelings intense enough to threaten established decorums with any danger of violation will most frequently have the character of morbidness in his eyes, the representation of passion in the colours of reality will commonly be left to the Movement poet. To him, whatever exists will appear, from that alone, fit to be represented: to probe the wounds of society and humanity is part of his business, and he will neither shrink from exhibiting what is in nature, because it is morally culpable, nor because it is physically revolting. Even in their representations of inanimate nature there will be a difference. The pictures most grateful and most familiar to the one will be those of a universe at peace within itself—of stability and duration—of irresistible power serenely at rest, or moving in fulfilment of the established arrangements of the universe: whatever suggests unity of design, and the harmonious co-operation of all the forces of nature towards ends intended by a Being in whom there is no variableness nor shadow of change. In the creations of the other, nature will oftener appear in the relations which it bears to the individual, rather than to the scheme of the universe; there will be a larger

place assigned to those of its aspects which reflect back the troubles of an unquiet soul, the impulses of a passionate, or the enjoyments of a voluptuous one; and on the whole, here too the Movement poet will extend so much more widely the bounds of the permitted, that his sources both of effect and of permanent interest will have a far larger range; and he will generally be more admired than the other, by all those by whom he is not actually condemned.

There is room in the world for poets of both these kinds; and the greatest will always partake of the nature of both. A comprehensive and catholic mind and heart will doubtless feel and exhibit all these different sympathies, each in its due proportion and degree; but what that due proportion may happen to be, is part of the larger question which every one has to ask of himself at such periods, viz., whether it were for the good of humanity at the particular era, that Conservative or Radical feeling should most predominate? For there is a perpetual antagonism between these two; and until human affairs are much better ordered than they are likely to be for some time to come, each will require to be, in a greater or less degree, tempered by the other: nor until the ordinances of law and of opinion are so framed as to give full scope to all individuality not positively noxious, and to restrain all that is noxious, will the two classes of sympathies ever be entirely reconciled.

Suppose, now, a poet of conservative sympathies, surprised by the shock of a revolution, which sweeps away the surviving symbols of what was great in the Past, and decides irrevocably the triumph of new things over the old: what will be the influence of this

event on his imagination and feelings? To us it seems that they will become both sadder and wiser. He will lose that blind faith in the Past, which previously might have tempted him to fight for it with a mistaken ardour, against what is generous and worthy in the new doctrines. The fall of the objects of his reverence, will naturally, if he has any discernment, open his mind to the perception of that in them whereby they deserved to fall. But while he is thus disenchanted of the old things, he will not have acquired that faith in the new, which animated the Radical poet. Having it not before, there is nothing in the triumph of those new things which can inspire him with it: institutions and creeds fall by their own badness, not by the goodness of that which strikes the actual blow. The destiny of mankind, therefore, will naturally appear to him in rather sombre colours; gloomy he may not be, but he will everywhere tend to the elegiac, to the contemplative and melancholy rather than to the epic and active; his song will be a subdued and plaintive symphony, more or less melodious according to the measure of his genius, on the old theme of blasted hopes and defeated aspirations. Yet there will now be nothing partial or one-sided in his sympathies: no sense of a conflict to be maintained, of a position to be defended against assailants, will warp the impartiality of his pity—will make him feel that there are wrongs and sufferings which must be dissembled, inconsistencies which must be patched up, vanities which he must attempt to consider serious, false pretences which he must try to mistake for truths, lest he should be too little satisfied with his own cause to do his duty as a combatant for it: he

will no longer feel obliged to treat all that part of human nature which rebelled against the old ideas, as if it were accursed—all those human joys and sufferings, hopes and fears, which were the strength of the new doctrines, and which the old ones did not take sufficient account of, as if they were unworthy of his sympathy. His heart will open itself freely and largely to the love of all that is loveable, to pity of all that is pitiable: every cry of suffering humanity will strike a responsive chord in his breast; whoever carries nobly his own share of the general burthen of human life, or generously helps to lighten that of others, is sure of his homage; while he has a deep fraternal charity for the erring and disappointed—for those who have aspired and fallen—who have fallen because they have aspired, because they too have felt those infinite longings for something greater than merely to live and die, which he as a poet has felt—which, as a poet, he cannot but have been conscious that he would have purchased the realization of by an even greater measure of error and suffering—and which, as a poet disenchanted, he knows too well the pain of renouncing, not to feel a deep indulgence for those who are victims of their inability to make the sacrifice.

In this ideal portraiture may be seen the genuine lineaments of Alfred de Vigny. The same features may, indeed, be traced more or less, in the greater part of the Royalist literature of young France; even in Balzac all these characteristics are distinctly visible, blended of course with his individual peculiarities, and modified by them. But M. de Vigny is a more perfect type, because he, more entirely than most others, writes from his real feelings, and not from

mere play of fancy. Many a writer in France, of no creed at all, and who therefore gives himself all the latitude of a Movement poet, is a Royalist with his imagination merely, for the sake of the picturesque effect of donjons and cloisters, crusaders and troubadours. And in retaliation many a Liberal or Republican critic will stand up stiffly for the old school in literature, for the *grand siècle*, because, like him, it takes its models from Greece or Rome; and will keep no terms with the innovators who find anything grand and poetical in the middle ages, or who fancy that barons or priests may look well in rhyme. But this is accident; an exception to the ordinary relation between political opinions and poetic tendencies. A Radical who finds his political *beau ideal* still farther back in the Past than the Royalist finds his, is not the type of a Radical poet; he will more resemble the Conservative poet of ages back: less of the Movement spirit may be found in him, than in many a nominal Royalist whose Royalist convictions have no very deep root. But when we would see the true character of a Royalist poet, we must seek for it in one like M. de Vigny, a conservative in feeling, and not in mere fancy, and a man (if we may judge from his writings) of rare simplicity of heart, and freedom from egotism and self-display. The most complete exemplification of the feelings and views of things which we have described as naturally belonging to the Royalist poet of young France, will be found in his productions, subsequent to the Revolution of 1830. But we must first see him as he was before 1830, and in writings in which the qualities we have enumerated had as yet manifested themselves only in a small degree.

Count Alfred de Vigny was born on the 27th of March 1799, at Loches in Touraine, that province which has given birth to so many of the literary celebrities of France. His father was an old cavalry officer of ancient lineage, who had served in the Seven Years War, and whose stories of his illustrious friends Chevert and d'Assas, and of the great Frederic (who was not a little indebted even for his victories, to the *prestige* he exercised over the enthusiastic imaginations of the French officers who fought against him), were the earliest nourishment of the son's childish aspirations. In the latter years of Napoleon our author was a youth at college; and he has described, in the first chapter of his 'Souvenirs de Servitude Militaire,' the restless and roving spirit, the ardour for military glory and military adventure, the contempt of all pursuits and wishes not terminating in a Marshal's bâton, which were the epidemic diseases of every French schoolboy during those years when 'the beat of drum,' to use his own expression, 'drowned the voice of the teacher,' and of which M. de Vigny confesses, in all humility, that the traces in himself are not entirely effaced. On the fall of Napoleon, he entered, at sixteen, into the royal guard; accompanied the Bourbons to Ghent during the Hundred Days, and remained in the army up to 1828. Fourteen years a soldier without seeing any service (for he was not even in the brief Spanish campaign)—the alternation of routine duties and enforced idleness, the *ennui* of an active profession without one opportunity for action except in obscure and painful civil broils, would have driven many to find relief in dissipation; M. de Vigny found it in contemplation and solitary thought.

'Those years of my life,' he says, 'would have been wasted, if I had not employed them in attentive and persevering observation, storing up the results for future years. I owe to my military life views of human nature which could never have reached me but under a soldier's uniform. There are scenes which one can only arrive at through disgusts, which, to one not forced to endure them, would be unendurable. . . Overcome by an *ennui* which I had little expected in that life so ardently desired, it became a necessity for me to rescue at least my nights from the empty and tiresome bustle of a soldier's days. In those nights I enlarged in silence what knowledge I had received from our tumultuous public studies; and thence the origin of my writings.'

M. de Vigny's first publications were poems, of which we shall say a few words presently, and which, whatever be the opinion formed of their absolute merit, are considered by a sober and impartial critic, M. Sainte-Beuve, as of a more completely original character than those of either Lamartine or Victor Hugo. It is, therefore, only in the common course of things, that they were at the time but moderately successful. The first of his works which attained popularity was 'Cinq-Mars, or a Conspiracy under Louis XIII.,' an historical romance of the school of Sir Walter Scott, then at the height of his popularity in France, and who was breathing the breath of life into the historical literature of France, and, through France, of all Europe.

M. de Vigny has chosen his scene at that passage of French history, which completed the transformation of the feudal monarchy of the middle ages into

the despotic and courtly monarchy of Louis XIV. The iron hand of Richelieu, reigning in the name of a master who both feared and hated him, but whom habit and conscious incapacity rendered his slave, had broken the remaining strength of those great lords, once powerful enough to cope single-handed with their sovereign, and several of whom, by confederating, could, to a very late period, dictate for themselves terms of capitulation. The crafty and cruel policy of the minister had mowed down all of those who, by position and personal qualities, stood pre-eminent above the rest. As for those whom, because they could not be dangerous to him, he spared, their restlessness and turbulence, surviving their power, might, during a royal minority, break out once more into impotent and passing tumults, but the next generation of them were and could be nothing but courtiers; an aristocracy still for purposes of rapine and oppression, for resistance to the despotism of the monarch they were as the feeblest of the multitude. A most necessary and salutary transformation in European society, and which, whether completed by the hands of a Richelieu or a Henry the Seventh, was, as M. de Vigny clearly sees (and perhaps no longer laments), the destined and inevitable preparation for the era of modern liberty and democracy. But the age was one of those (there are several of them in history) in which the greatest and most beneficial ends were accomplished by the basest means. It was the age of struggle between unscrupulous intellect and brute force; intellect not yet in a condition to assert its inherent right of supremacy by pure means, and no longer wielding, as in the great era of the Reforma-

tion, the noble weapon of an honest popular enthusiasm. Iago prime minister, is the type of the men who crumbled into dust the feudal aristocracies of Europe. In no period were the unseen springs both of the good and the evil that was done, so exclusively the viler passions of humanity: what little of honourable or virtuous feeling might exist in high places during that era, was probably oftenest found in the aristocratic faction so justly and beneficially extirpated; for in the rule of lawless force, some noble impulses are possible in the rulers at least—in that of cunning and fraud, none.

Towards the close of Richelieu's career, when the most difficult part of his task was done, but his sinking health, and the growing jealousy and fear of that master, one word of whom would even then have dismissed him into private life, made the cares of his station press heavier on him, and required a more constant and anxious watchfulness than ever; it was his practice to amuse the frivolous monarch with a perpetual succession of new favourites, who served his purpose till Louis was tired of them, or whom, if any of them proved capable of acquiring a permanent tenure of the royal favour, and of promoting other designs than his own, he well knew how to remove. The last, the most accomplished, and the most unfortunate of these was Henri d'Effiat, Marquis de Cinq-Mars, and of him our author has made the hero of his tale.*

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Such is 'Cinq-Mars, or a Conspiracy under Louis

* [Here followed originally a sketch of the plot of the romance, now omitted as unnecessary.]

XIII.'—a work not free from the fault, so far as it is a fault, most common in the romantic literature of young France; it partakes somewhat of the 'Literature of Despair;' it too much resembles M. Eugene Sue's early novels, in which every villain dies honoured and prosperous at a good old age, after every innocent person in the tale has been crushed and exterminated by him without pity or remorse—through which the mocking laugh of a chorus of demons seems to ring in our ears that the world is delivered over to an evil spirit, and that man is his creature and his prey. But such is not the character of M. de Vigny's writings, and the resemblance in this single instance is only casual. Still, as a mere work of art, if the end of art be, as conceived by the ancients and by the great German writers, the production of the intrinsically beautiful, Cinq-Mars cannot be commended. A story in which the odious and the contemptible in man and life act so predominant a part, which excites our scorn or our hatred so much more than our pity—comes within a far other category than that of the Beautiful, and can be justified on no canons of taste of which that is the end. But it is not possible for the present generation of France to restrict the purposes of art within this limit. They are too much in earnest. They take life too much *au sérieux*. It may be possible (what some of his more enthusiastic admirers say of Goethe) that a thoroughly earnest mind may struggle upwards through the region of clouds and storms to an untroubled summit, where all other good sympathies and aspirations confound themselves in a serene love and culture of the calmly beautiful—look-

ing down upon the woes and struggles of perplexed humanity with as calm a gaze (though with a more helping arm) as that of him who is most placidly indifferent to human weal. But however this may be, the great majority of persons in earnest will remain always in the intermediate region; will feel themselves more or less militant in this world—having something to pursue in it, different from the Beautiful, different from their own mental tranquillity and health, and which they will pursue, if they have the gifts of an artist, by all the resources of art, whatever becomes of canons of criticism, and beauty in the abstract. The writers and readers of works of imagination in France have the desire of amusement as much as English readers, the sense of beauty generally much more; but they have also, very generally, a thirst for something which shall address itself to their real-life feelings, and not to those of imagination merely—which shall give them an idea or a sentiment connected with the actual world. And if a story or a poem is possessed by an Idea—if it powerfully exhibits some form of real life, or some conception respecting human nature or society which may tend to consequences, not only is it not necessarily expected to represent abstract beauty, but it is pardoned for exhibiting even hideousness. These considerations should enable us to understand and tolerate such works as *Le Pere Goriot*, of Balzac, or *Leoni*, of George Sand, and to understand, if we do not tolerate, such as the *Antony* or *Richard Darlington*, of Alexandre Dumas.

Now, among the ideas with which French literature has been possessed for the last ten years, is that

of realizing, and bringing home to the imagination, the history and spirit of past ages. Sir Walter Scott, having no object but to please, and having readers who only sought to be pleased, would not have told the story of Richelieu and Cinq-Mars without greatly softening the colouring; and the picture would have been more agreeable than M. de Vigny's, but it would not have been so true to the age. M. de Vigny preferred the truer to the more pleasing, and *his* readers have sanctioned the preference.

Even according to this view of its object, the work has obvious defects. The characters of some of the subordinate personages, Friar Joseph for instance, are even more revolting than the truth of history requires. De Thou, the pious and studious man of retirement, cast out into storms for which he was never meant—the only character of principle in the tale, yet who sacrifices principle as well as life to romantic friendship—is but coldly represented; his goodness is too simple, his attachment too instinctive, too dog-like, and so much intensity of friendship is not sufficiently accounted for; Balzac would have managed these things better. The author also crowds his story too much with characters; he cannot bear that any celebrated personage whom the age affords should be passed over, and consequently introduces many who ought not to have been drawn at all unless they could be drawn truly, and on whom he has not been able to employ the same accurate study as he has on his principal characters. Richelieu and Louis XIII. are historical figures of which he has taken the trouble to form a well-digested conception; but he can know nothing of Milton, whom he introduces, on his way

from Italy, reading his 'Paradise Lost,' not written till twenty years after, to Corneille, Descartes, and a crowd of other poets, wits, and philosophers, in the *salon* of the celebrated courtezan, Marion Delorme. But these are minor blemishes. As a specimen of art employed in embodying the character of an age, the merit of 'Cinq-Mars' is very great. The spirit of the age penetrates every nook and corner of it; the same atmosphere which hangs over the personages of the story hangs over us; we feel the eye of the omnipresent Richelieu upon us, and the influences of France in its Catholic and aristocratic days, of ardent, pleasure-loving, laughter-loving, and danger-loving France, all round us. To this merit is to be added, that the representations of feeling are always simple and graceful; the author has not, like so many inferior writers, supplied by the easy resource of mere exaggeration of colouring, the incapacity to show us anything subtle or profound, any trait we knew not before, in the workings of passion in the human heart. On the whole, 'Cinq-Mars' is admirable as a first production of its kind, but altogether of an inferior order to its successors, the *Grandeur et Servitude Militaire*, and *Stello*; to which we proceed.

Of M. de Vigny's prose works, 'Cinq-Mars' alone was written previous to the Revolution of 1830; and though the royalist tendency of the author's political opinions is manifest throughout—indeed the book is one long protest against the levelling of the feudal aristocracy—it does not, nor does any part of the royalist literature of the last twenty years, entirely answer to our description of the Conservative school

of poetry and romance. To find a real Conservative literature in France one must look earlier than the first Revolution, as to study the final transformation of that literature, one must descend below the last. One must distinguish three periods; Conservatism triumphant, Conservatism militant, Conservatism vanquished. The first is represented by Racine, Fénélon, and Voltaire in his tragedies, before he quitted the paths of his predecessors. Jean Jacques Rousseau is the father and founder of the Movement literature of France, and Madame de Stael its second great apostle: in them first the revolt of the modern mind against the social arrangements and doctrines which had descended from of old, spoke with the inspired voice of genius. At the head of the literature of Conservatism in its second or militant period, stands Chateaubriand: a man whose name marks one of the turning points in the literary history of his country: poetically a Conservative to the inmost core—rootedly feudal and Catholic—whose genius burst into life during the tempest of a revolution which hurled down from their pedestals all his objects of reverence; which saddened his imagination, modified (without impairing) his Conservatism by the addition of its multiform experiences, and made the world to him too full of disorder and gloom, too much a world without harmony, and ill at ease, to allow of his exhibiting the pure untroubled spirit of Conservative poetry as exemplified in Southey, or still more in Wordsworth. To this literature, of Conservatism discouraged but not yet disenchanted, still hopeful and striving to set up again its old idols, 'Cinq-Mars' belongs. From the final and hopeless overthrow of the old order of

society in July 1830, begins the era of Conservatism disenchanted—Conservatism which is already in the past tense—which for practical purposes is abandoned, and only contributes its share, as all past associations and experiences do, towards shaping and colouring the individual's impressions of the present.

This is the character which pervades the two principal of M. de Vigny's more recent works, the 'Servitude et Grandeur Militaire,' and 'Stello.' He has lost his faith in Royalism, and in the system of opinions connected with it. His eyes are opened to all the iniquities and hypocrisies of the state of society which is passing away. But he cannot take up with any of the systems of politics, and of either irreligious or religious philosophy, which profess to lay open the mystery of what is to follow, and to guarantee that the new order of society will not have its own iniquities and hypocrisies of as dark a kind. He has no faith in any systems, or in man's power of prophecy; nor is he sure that the new tendencies of society, take them for all in all, have more to satisfy the wants of a thoughtful and loving spirit, than the old had; at all events not so much more, as to make the condition of human nature a cheerful subject to him. He looks upon life, and sees most things crooked, and (saving whatever assurance his religious impressions may afford to him that in some unknown way all things must be working for good) sees not how they shall be made straight. This is not a happy state of mind, but it is not an unfavourable one to poetry. If the worse forms of it produce a 'Literature of Despair,' the better are seen in a writer like M. de Vigny—who having now no theories of his own or of

his teachers to save the credit of, looks life steadily in the face—applies himself to understanding whatever of evil, and of heroic struggle with evil, it presents to his individual experience—and gives forth his pictures of both, with deep feeling, but with the calmness of one who has no point to carry, no quarrel to maintain, over and above the 'general one of every son of Adam with his lot here below.'

M. de Vigny has been a soldier, and he has been, and is, a poet: the situation and feelings of a soldier (especially a soldier not in active service), and, so far as the measure of his genius admits, those of a poet, are what he is best acquainted with, and what, therefore, as a man of earnest mind, not now taking anything on trust, it was most natural he should attempt to delineate. The 'Souvenirs Militaires' are the embodiment of the author's experiences in the one capacity, 'Stello,' in the other. Each consists of three touching and beautifully told stories, founded on fact, in which the life and position of a soldier in modern times, and of a poet at all times, in their relation to society, are shadowed out. In relation to society chiefly; for that is the prominent feature in all the speculations of the French mind; and thence it is that their poetry is so much shallower than ours, and their works of fiction so much deeper; that, of the metaphysics of every mode of feeling and thinking, so little is to be learnt from them, and of its social influences so much.

The soldier, and the poet, appear to M. de Vigny alike misplaced, alike ill at ease, in the present condition of human life. In the soldier he sees a human being set apart for a profession doomed to extinction,

and doomed consequently, in the interval, to a continual decrease of dignity and of the sympathies of mankind. War he sees drawing to a close; compromises and diplomatic arrangements now terminate the differences among civilized nations; the army is reduced more and more to mere parade, or the functions of a police; called out from time to time, to shed its own blood and that of malcontent fellow-citizens in tumults where much popular hatred is to be earned, but no glory; disliked by taxpayers for its burthensomeness; looked down upon by the industrious for its enforced idleness: its employers themselves always in dread of its numbers, and jealous of its restlessness, which, in a soldier, is but the impatience of a man who is useless and nobody, for a chance of being useful and of being something. The soldier thus remains with all the burthens, all the irksome restraints of his condition, aggravated, but without the hopes which lighted it up, the excitements which gave it zest. Those alone, says M. de Vigny, who have been soldiers, know what servitude is. To the soldier alone is obedience, passive and active, the law of his life, the law of every day and of every moment; obedience, not stopping at sacrifice, nor even at crime. In him alone is the abnegation of his self-will, of his liberty of independent action, absolute and unreserved; the grand distinction of humanity, the responsibility of the individual as a moral agent, being made over, once for all, to superior authority. The type of human nature which these circumstances create, well deserves the study of the artist and the philosopher. M. de Vigny has deeply meditated on it. He has drawn with delicacy and profundity that

mixture of Spartan and stoical impassibility with child-like *insouciance* and *bonhomie*, which is the result, on the one hand, of a life of painful and difficult obedience to discipline—on the other, of a conscience freed from concern or accountability for the quality of the actions of which that life is made up. On the means by which the moral position of the soldier might be raised, and his hardships alleviated, M. de Vigny has ideas worthy of the consideration of him who is yet to come—the statesman who has care and leisure for plans of social amelioration unconnected with party contests and the cry of the hour. His stories, full of melancholy beauty, will carry into thousands of minds and hearts which would otherwise have been unvisited by it, a conception of a soldier's trials and a soldier's virtues in times which, like ours, are not those of martial glory.

The first of these tales at least, if not all the three, if the author's words are to be taken literally, is unvarnished fact. But familiar as the modern French romance-writers have made us with the artifice of assimilating their fictions, for the sake of artistic reality, to actual recollections, we dare not trust these appearances; and we must needs suppose that, though suggested by facts, the stories are indebted to M. de Vigny's invention not only for their details, but for some of their main circumstances. If he had been so fortunate as to meet with facts which, related as they actually occurred, served so perfectly as these do his purposes of illustration, he would hardly have left any possibility of doubt as to their authenticity. He must know the infinite distance, as to power of influencing the mind, between the best

contrived and most probable fiction, and the smallest fact.

The first tale, 'Laurette, ou Le Cachet Rouge,' is the story of an old *chef de bataillon* (an intermediate grade between captain and major), whom the author, when following Louis XVIII. in the retreat to Ghent, overtook on his march. This old man was leading along the miry road, on a day of pelting rain, a shabby mule drawing 'a little wooden cart covered over with three hoops and a piece of black oilcloth, and resembling a cradle on a pair of wheels.' On duty he was escorting the King as far as the frontier, and on duty he was about to return from thence to his regiment, to fight against the King at Waterloo. He had begun life at sea, and had been taken from the merchant service to command a brig of war, when the navy, like the army, was left without officers by the emigration. In 1797, under the government of the Directory, he weighed anchor for Cayenne, with sixty soldiers and a prisoner, one of those whom the *coup d'état* of the 18th of Fructidor had consigned to deportation. Along with this prisoner, whom he was ordered to treat with respect, he received a packet 'with three red seals, the middle one of enormous size,' not to be opened till the vessel reached one degree north of the Line. As he was nailing-up this packet, the possession of which made him feel uncomfortable, in a nook of his cabin, safe and in sight, his prisoner, a mere youth, entered, holding by the hand a beautiful girl of seventeen. His offence, it appeared, was a newspaper article: he had 'trusted in their liberty of the press,' had stung the Directory, and, only four days after his marriage, he was seized, tried,

and received sentence of death, commuted for deportation to Cayenne, whither his young wife determined on accompanying him. We will not trust ourselves to translate any of the scenes which exhibit these two: a Marryat would be required to find a style for rendering the sailor-like *naïveté* of the honest officer's recital. A more exquisite picture we have never seen of innocence and ingenuousness, true warm-hearted affection, and youthful buoyancy of spirits breaking out from under the load of care and sorrow which had been laid so early and so suddenly on their young heads. They won the good-natured captain's heart: he had no family and no ties; he offered, on arriving at Cayenne, to settle there with his little savings, and adopt them as his children.' On reaching the prescribed latitude he broke the fatal seal, and shuddered at beholding the sentence of death, and an order for immediate execution. After a terrible internal struggle, military discipline prevailed: he did as was commanded him, and 'that moment,' says he, 'has lasted for me to the present time; as long as I live I shall drag it after me as a galley-slave drags his chain.' Laurette became an incurable idiot. 'I felt something in me which said —remain with her to the end of thy days and protect her.' Her mother was dead; her relations wished to put her into a madhouse; 'I turned my back upon them, and kept her with me.' Taking a disgust to the sea, he exchanged into the army; the unhappy girl was with him in all Napoleon's campaigns, even in the retreat from Russia, tended by him like a daughter, and when the author overtook him he was conducting her in the cart with its three hoops and

its canvas cover. The author shows her to us—a picture not inferior to Sterne's Maria, and which deserves to live as long: to detach it from the rest of the story would be unjust to the author. M. de Vigny parted from the old officer at the frontier, and learnt, long after, that he perished at Waterloo; she, left alone, and consigned to a madhouse, died in three days.

'La Veillée de Vincennes' is a less tragical story: the life and destiny of an old adjutant of artillery, with whom the author, an officer in the guards, then in garrison at Vincennes, made acquaintance in the court-yard of the fortress, the evening previous to a general review and inspection. The old adjutant, who was in charge of the powder, was anxiously casting up long columns of figures, feeling himself eternally disgraced if there should be found on the morrow the most trifling inaccuracy in his books; and regretting the impossibility, from the late hour, of giving another glance that night at the contents of the powder magazine. The soldiers of the guard, who were not merely the *élite* of the army, but the *élite* of the *élite*, 'thought themselves,' says our author, 'dishonoured by the most insignificant fault.' 'Go, you are puritans of honour, all of you,' said I, tapping him on the shoulder. He bowed, and withdrew towards the barrack where he was quartered; then, with an innocence of manners peculiar to the honest race of soldiers, he returned with a handful of hemp-seed for a hen who was bringing up her twelve chickens under the old bronze cannon on which we were seated.' This hen, the delight of her master and the pet of the soldiers, could not endure any

person not in uniform. At a late hour that night the author caught the sound of music from an open window: he approached; the voices were those of the old adjutant, his daughter, and a young non-commissioned officer of artillery, her intended husband; they saw him, invited him in, and we owe to this evening a charming description of the simple, innocent interior of this little family, and their simple history. The old soldier was the orphan child of a villager of Montreuil, near Versailles; brought up, and taught music and gardening, by the curé of his village. At sixteen, a word sportively dropped by Marie Antoinette when, alone with the Princess de Lamballe, she met him and his pretty playmate Pierrette in the park of Montreuil, made him enlist as a soldier, hoping to be made a serjeant and to marry Pierrette. The latter wish was in time accomplished through the benevolence of Marie Antoinette, who, finding him resolute not to owe the attainment of his wishes to the bounty of a patron, herself taught Pierrette to sing and act in the opera of *Rose et Colas*, and through her protection the *début* of the unknown actress was so successful that in one representation she earned a suitable portion for a soldier's wife. The merit of this little anecdote of course lies in the management of the details, which, for nature and gracefulness, would do credit to the first names in French literature. Pierrette died young, leaving her husband with two treasures, an only daughter, and a miniature of herself, painted by the Princess de Lamballe. Since then he had lived a life of obscure integrity, and had received all the military honours attainable by a private soldier, but

no promotion, which, indeed, he had never much sought, thinking it a greater honour to be a serjeant in the guard than a captain in the line. 'How poor,' thought M. de Vigny, 'are the mad ambitions and discontents of us young officers, compared with the soul of a soldier like this, scrupulous of his honour, and thinking it sullied by the most trifling negligence or breach of discipline; without ambition, vanity, or luxury, always a slave, and always content and proud of his servitude; his dearest recollection being one of gratitude; and believing his destiny to be regulated for his good by an overruling Providence!'

An hour or two after this time the author was awakened from sleep by something like the shock of an earthquake: part of one of the powder magazines had exploded. With difficulty and peril the garrison stopped the spread of mischief. On reaching the seat of the catastrophe, they found the fragments of the body of the old adjutant, who, apparently having risen at early dawn for one more examination of the powder, had, by some accident, set it on fire. The King presently arrived to return thanks and distribute rewards: he came, and departed. 'I thought,' says M. de Vigny, 'of the family of the poor adjutant: but I was alone in thinking of them. In general, when princes pass anywhere they pass too quickly.'

'La Vie et la Mort du Capitaine Renaud, ou La Canne de Jonc,' is a picture of a more elevated description than either of these two, delineating a character of greater intellectual power and a loftier moral greatness. Captain Renaud is a philosopher; one like those of old, who has learnt the wisdom of life from its experiences; has weighed in the balance the great-

nesses and littlenesses of the world, and has carried with him from every situation in which he has been placed, and every trial and temptation to which he has been subject, the impressions it was fitted to leave on a thoughtful and sensitive mind. There is no story, no incident, in this life; there is but a noble character, unfolding to us the process of its own formation; not so much telling us, as making us see, how one circumstance disabused it of false objects of esteem and admiration, how another revealed to it the true. We feel with the young soldier his youthful enthusiasm for Napoleon, and for all of which that name is a symbol; we see this enthusiasm die within him as the truth dawns upon him that this great man is an actor, that the *prestige* with which he overawed the world is in much, if not in the largest portion of it, the effect of stage-trick, and that a life built upon deception, and directed to essentially selfish ends, is not the ideal he had worshipped. He learns to know a real hero in Collingwood, whose prisoner he is for five years; and never was that most beautiful of military and naval characters drawn in a more loving spirit, or with a nobler appreciation, than in this book. From Collingwood, all his life a martyr to duty—the benignant father and guardian angel of all under his command—who pining for an English home, his children growing up to womanhood without having seen him, lived and died at sea, because his country or his country's institutions could not furnish him a successor;—from him the hero of our author's tale learnt to exchange the paltry admiration of mere power and success, the worship of the vulgar objects of ambition and vanity, for a heartfelt recog-

nition of the greatness of devotion and self-sacrifice. A spirit like that of Collingwood governed and pervaded the remainder of his life. One bitter remembrance he had: it was of a night attack upon a Russian outpost, in which, hardly awakened from sleep, an innocent and beautiful youth, one of the boys of fourteen who sometimes held officers' commissions in the Russian army, fell dead in his gray-haired father's sight, by the unconscious hand of Renaud. He never used sabre more, and was known to the soldiers by carrying ever after a *canne de jonc*, which dropped from the dying hand of the poor boy. Many and solemn were the thoughts on war and the destiny of a soldier, which grew in him from this passage in his life—nor did it ever cease to haunt his remembrance, and, at times, vex his conscience with misgivings. Unambitious, unostentatious, and therefore unnoticed, he did his duty always and everywhere without reward or distinction, until, in the Three Days of July 1830, a military point of honour retaining him with his corps on the Royalist side, he received his death-wound by a shot from a poor street-boy—who tended him in tears and remorse in his last moments, and to whom he left by will a provision for his education and maintenance, on condition that he should not become a soldier.

Such is a brief outline of this remarkable book: to which we have felt throughout, and feel still more on looking back, what scanty justice we have done. Among the writings of our day we know not one which breathes a nobler spirit, or in which every detail is conceived and wrought out in a manner more worthy of that spirit. But whoever would know

what it is, must read the book itself. No *résumé* can convey any idea of it; the impression it makes is not the sum of the impressions of particular incidents or particular sayings, it is the effect of the tone and colouring of the whole. We do not seem to be listening to the author, to be receiving a 'moral' from any of his stories, or from his characters an 'example' prepense; the poem of human life is opened before us, and M. de Vigny does but chaunt from it, in a voice of subdued sadness, a few strains telling of obscure wisdom and unrewarded virtue; of those antique characters which, without self-glorification or hope of being appreciated, 'carry out,' as he expresses it, 'the sentiment of duty to its extremest consequences,' and whom he avers, as a matter of personal experience, that he has never met with in any walk of life but the profession of arms.

'Stello' is a work of similar merit to the 'Military Recollections,' though, we think, somewhat inferior. The poet, and his condition—the function he has to perform in the world, and its treatment of him—are the subject of the book. Stello, a young poet, having, it would appear, no personal cause of complaint against the world, but subject to fits of nervous despondency, seeks relief under one of these attacks from a mysterious personage, the *docteur noir;* and discloses to him that in his *ennui* and his thirst for activity and excitement, he has almost determined to fling himself into politics, and sacrifice himself for some one of the parties or forms of government which are struggling with one another in the world. The doctor prescribes to him three stories, exhibiting the fate of the poet

under every form of government, and the fruitlessness of his expecting from the world, or from men of the world, aught but negligence or contempt. The stories are of three poets, all of whom the *docteur noir* has seen die, as, in fact, the same person might have been present at all their deaths: under three different governments—in an absolute monarchy, a constitutional government, and a democratic revolution. Gilbert, the poet and satirist, called from his poverty Gilbert *sans-culotte*, who died mad in a hospital at Paris, he who wrote in the last days of his life the verses beginning

'Au banquet de la vie infortuné convive
J'apparus un jour, et je meurs'—

Chatterton—

'the marvellous boy,
The sleepless soul, who perished in his pride'—

driven to suicide at eighteen by the anguish of disappointment and neglect; and André Chénier, the elder brother of Chénier the revolutionary poet—whose own poems, published not till many years after his death, were at once hailed by the new school of poetry in France as having anticipated what they had since done, and given the real commencement to the new era: he perished by the guillotine only two days before the fall of Robespierre; on the scaffold he exclaimed, striking his forehead, '*Il y avait pourtant quelque chose là!*' The stories adhere strictly to the spirit of history, though not to the literal facts, and are, as usual, beautifully told, especially the last and most elaborate of them, 'André Chénier.' In this tale we are shown the prison of Saint-Lazare during the reign of terror, and the courtesies and gallantries

of polished life still blossoming in the foulness of the dungeon and on the brink of the tomb. Madame de St. Aignan, with her reserved and delicate passion for André Chénier, is one of the most graceful of M. de Vigny's creations. We are brought into the presence of Robespierre and Saint-Just—who are drawn, not indeed like Catoes and Brutuses, though there have been found in our time Frenchmen not indisposed to take that view of them. But the hatred of exaggeration which always characterizes M. de Vigny, does not desert him here: the terrorist chiefs do not figure in his pages as monsters thirsting for blood, nor as hypocrites and impostors with merely the low aims of selfish ambition: either of these representations would have been false to history. He shows us these men as they were, as such men could not but have been; men distinguished, morally, chiefly by two qualities, entire hardness of heart, and the most overweening and bloated self-conceit: for nothing less, assuredly, could lead any man to believe that his individual judgment respecting the public good is a warrant to him for exterminating all who are suspected of forming any other judgment, and for setting up a machine to cut off heads, sixty or seventy every day, till some unknown futurity be accomplished, some Utopia realized.

The lesson which the *docteur noir* finds in these tragical histories, for the edification of poets, is still that of abnegation: to expect nothing for themselves from changes in society or in political institutions; to renounce for ever the idea that the world will, or can be expected, to fall at their feet and worship them; to consider themselves, once for all, as martyrs, if

they are so, and instead of complaining, to take up their cross and bear it.

This counsel is so essentially wise, and so much required everywhere, but above all in France—where the idea that intellect ought to rule the world, an idea in itself true and just, has taken such root that every youth who fancies himself a thinker or an artist thinks that he has a right to everything society has to give, and deems himself the victim of ingratitude because he is not loaded with its riches and honours; M. de Vigny has so genuine a feeling of the true greatness of a poet, of the spirit which has dwelt in all poets deserving the name of great—that he may be pardoned for what there is in his picture of a poet's position and destiny in the actual world, somewhat morbid and overcharged, though with a foundation of universal truth. It is most true that, whether in poetry or in philosophy, a person endowed in any eminent degree with genius—originality—the gift of seeing truths at a greater depth than the world can penetrate, or of feeling deeply and justly things which the world has not yet learnt to feel—that such a person needs not hope to be appreciated, to be otherwise than made light of and evil entreated, in virtue of what is greatest in him, his genius. For (except in things which can be reduced to mathematical demonstration, or made obvious to sense) that which all mankind will be prepared to see and understand to-morrow, it cannot require much genius to perceive to-day; and all persons of distinguished originality, whether thinkers or artists, are subject to the eternal law, that they must themselves create the tastes or the habits of thought by means of which they will after-

wards be appreciated. No great poet or philosopher since the Christian era (apart from the accident of a rich patron) could have gained either rank or subsistence *as* a poet or a philosopher; but things are not, and have seldom been, so badly ordered in the world, as that he could not get it in any other way. Chatterton, and probably Gilbert, could have earned an honest livelihood, if their inordinate pride would have accepted it in the common paths of obscure industry. And much as it is to be lamented, for the world's sake more than that of the individual, that they who are equal to the noblest things are not reserved for such,—it is nevertheless true that persons of genius, persons whose superiority is that they can do what others cannot do, can generally also, if they choose, do better than others that which others do, and which others are willing to honour and reward. If they cannot, it is usually from something ill regulated in themselves, something to be cured of which would be for the health even of their own minds; perhaps oftenest because they will not take the pains which less gifted persons are willing to take, though less than half as much would suffice; because the habit of doing with ease things on a large scale, makes them impatient of slow and unattractive toil. It is their own choice, then. If they wish for worldly honour and profit, let them seek it in the way others do; the struggle indeed is hard, and the attainment uncertain, but not specially so to them; on the contrary, they have advantages over most of their competitors. If they prefer their nobler vocation, they have no cause of quarrel with the world because they follow that vocation under the conditions necessarily implied in it. If it were possible that they

should from the first have the acclamations of the world, they could not be deserving of them; all they could be doing for the world must be comparatively little: they could not be the great men they fancy themselves.

A story, or a poem, might nevertheless be conceived, which would throw tenfold more light upon the poetic character, and upon the condition of a poet in the world, than any instance, either historical or fictitious, of the world's undervaluing of him. It would exhibit the sufferings of a poet, not from mortified vanity, but from the poetic temperament itself—under arrangements of society made by and for harder natures, and in a world which, for any but the unsensitive, is not a place of contentment ever, nor of peace till after many a hard-fought battle. That M. de Vigny could conceive such a subject in the spirit in which it should be conceived, is clear from the signs by which his Stello recognises himself as a poet. 'Because there is in nature no beauty, nor grandeur, nor harmony, which does not cause in me a prophetic thrill—which does not fill me with a deep emotion, and swell my eyelids with tears divine and inexplicable. Because of the infinite pity I feel for mankind, my companions in suffering, and the eager desire I feel to hold out my hand to them, and raise them incessantly by words of commiseration and of love. Because I feel in my inmost being an invisible and undefinable power which resembles a presentiment of the future, and a revelation of the mysterious causes of the present:' a presentiment which is not always imaginary, but often the instinctive insight of a sensitive nature, which from its finer

texture vibrates to impressions so evanescent as to be unfelt by others, and, by that faculty as by an additional sense, is apprised, it cannot tell how, of things without, which escape the cognizance of the less delicately organized.

These *are* the tests, or some of the tests, of a poetic nature; and it must be evident that to such, even when supported by a positive religious faith, and that a cheerful one, this life is naturally, or at least may easily be, a vale of tears; a place in which there is no rest. The poet who would speak of such, must do it in the spirit of those beautiful lines of Shelley—himself the most perfect type of that which he described:—

> 'High, spirit-winged heart, who dost for ever
> Beat thine unfeeling bars with vain endeavour,
> Till those bright plumes of thought, in which arrayed
> It over-soared this low and worldly shade,
> Lie shattered, and thy panting wounded breast
> Stains with dear blood its unmaternal nest!
> I weep vain tears: blood would less bitter be,
> Yet poured forth gladlier, could it profit thee.'

The remainder of M. de Vigny's works are plays and poems. The plays are 'Le More de Venise,' a well-executed and very close translation of Othello; 'La Maréchale d'Ancre,' from the same period of history as Cinq-Mars; and 'Chatterton,' the story in Stello, with the characters more developed, the outline more filled up. Without disparagement to these works, we think the narrative style more suitable than the dramatic to the quality of M. de Vigny's genius. If we had not read these plays, we should not have known how much of the impressiveness of his other writings comes from his own presence in

them (if the expression may be allowed), animating and harmonizing the picture, by blending with its natural tints the colouring of his own feelings and character.

Of the poems much were to be said, if a foreigner could be considered altogether a competent judge of them. For our own part we confess that, of the admirable poetry to be found in French literature, that part is most poetry to us, which is written in prose. In regard to verse-writing, we would even exceed the severity of Horace's precept against mediocrity; we hold, that nothing should be written in verse which is not exquisite. In prose, anything may be said which is worth saying at all; in verse, only what is worth saying better than prose can say it. The gems alone of thought and fancy, are worth setting with so finished and elaborate a workmanship; and even of them, those only whose effect is heightened by it: which takes place under two conditions; and in one or other of these two, if we are not mistaken, must be found the origin and justification of all composition in verse. A thought or feeling requires verse for its adequate expression, when in order that it may dart into the soul with the speed of a lightning-flash, the ideas or images that are to convey it require to be pressed closer together than is compatible with the rigid grammatical construction of the prose sentence. One recommendation of verse, therefore, is, that it affords a language more *condensed* than prose. The other is derived from one of the natural laws of the human mind, in the utterance of its thoughts impregnated with its feelings. All emotion which has taken possession of the whole

being—which flows unresistedly, and therefore equably —instinctively seeks a language that flows equably like itself; and must either find it, or be conscious of an unsatisfied want, which even impedes and prematurely stops the flow of the feeling. Hence, ever since man has been man, all deep and sustained feeling has tended to express itself in rhythmical language; and the deeper the feeling, the more characteristic and decided the rhythm; provided always the feeling be sustained as well as deep; for, a *fit* of passion has no natural connexion with verse or music, a *mood* of passion has the strongest. No one, who does not hold this distinction in view, will comprehend the importance which the Greek lawgivers and philosophers attached to music, and which appears inexplicable till we understand how perpetual an aim of their polity it was to subdue *fits* of passion, and to sustain and reinforce *moods* of it.* This view of the origin of rhythmic utterance in general, and verse in particular, naturally demands *short* poems, it being impossible that a feeling so intense as to require a more rhythmical cadence than that of eloquent prose, should sustain itself at its highest elevation for long together; and we think (heretical as the opinion may be) that, except in the ages when the absence of

* 'The Dorian mood
Of flutes and soft recorders; such as raised
To height of noblest temper heroes old
Arming to battle; and, *instead of rage,*
Deliberate valour breathed, firm and unmoved
With dread of death, to flight or foul retreat:
Nor wanting power to mitigate and swage,
With solemn touches, troubled thoughts, and chase
Anguish, and doubt, and fear, and sorrow and pain,
From mortal or immortal minds.'

written books occasioned all things to be thrown into verse for facility of memory, or in those other ages in which writing in verse may happen to be a fashion, a long poem will always be felt (though perhaps unconsciously) to be something unnatural and hollow; something which it requires the genius of a Homer, a Dante, or a Milton, to induce posterity to read, or at least to read through.

Verse, then, being only allowable where prose would be inadequate; and the inadequacy of prose arising either from its not being sufficiently condensed, or from its not having cadence enough to express sustained passion, which is never long-winded—it follows, that if prolix writing is vulgarly called *prosy* writing, a very true feeling of the distinction between verse and prose shows itself in the vulgarism; and that the one unpardonable sin in a versified composition, next to the absence of meaning, and of true meaning, is diffuseness. From this sin it will be impossible to exculpate M. Alfred de Vigny. His poems, graceful and often fanciful though they be, are, to us, marred by their diffuseness.

Of the more considerable among them, that which most resembles what, in our conception, a poem ought to be, is 'Moïse.' The theme is still the sufferings of the man of genius, the inspired man, the intellectual ruler and seer: not however, this time, the great man persecuted by the world, but the great man honoured by it, and in his natural place at the helm of it, he on whom all rely, whom all reverence—Moses on Pisgah, Moses the appointed of God, the judge, captain and hierarch of the chosen race—crying to God in anguish of spirit for deliverance and rest; that the cares and toils, the

weariness and solitariness of heart, of him who is lifted altogether above his brethren, be no longer imposed upon him—that the Almighty may withdraw his gifts, and suffer him to sleep the sleep of common humanity. His cry is heard; when the clouds disperse, which veiled the summit of the mountain from the Israelites waiting in prayer and prostration at its foot, Moses is no more seen: and now, 'marching towards the promised land, Joshua advanced, pale and pensive of mien; for he was already the chosen of the Omnipotent.'

The longest of the poems is 'Eloa; or, the Sister of the Angels;' a story of a bright being, created from a tear of the Redeemer, and who falls, tempted by pity for the Spirit of Darkness. The idea is fine, and the details graceful, a word we have often occasion to use in speaking of M. de Vigny: but this and most of his other poems are written in the heroic verse, that is to say, he has aggravated the imperfections, for his purpose, of the most prosaic language in Europe, by choosing to write in its most prosaic metre. The absence of prosody, of long and short or accented and unaccented syllables, renders the French language essentially unmusical; while—the unbending structure of its sentence, of which there is essentially but one type for verse and prose, almost precluding inversions and elisions—all the screws and pegs of the prose sentence are retained to encumber the verse. If it is to be raised at all above prose, variety of rhythm must be sought in variety of versification; there is no room for it in the monotonous structure of the heroic metre. Where is it that Racine, always an admirable writer, appears to us more than an

admirable *prose* writer? In his irregular metres—in the choruses of Esther and of Athalie. It is not wonderful then if the same may be said of M. de Vigny. We shall conclude with the following beautiful little poem, one of the few which he has produced in the style and measure of lyric verse:—

'Viens sur la mer, jeune fille,
Sois sans effroi;
Viens sans trésor, sans famille,
Seule avec moi.
Mon bateau sur les eaux brille,
Voi ses mâts, voi
Ses pavillons et sa quille.
Ce n'est rien qu'une coquille,
Mais j'y suis roi.

'Pour l'esclave on fit la terre,
O ma beauté!
Mais pour l'homme libre, austère
L'immensité.
Les flots savent un mystère
De volupté;
Leur soupir involontaire
Veut dire: amour solitaire,
Et liberté.'

BENTHAM.*

THERE are two men, recently deceased, to whom their country is indebted not only for the greater part of the important ideas which have been thrown into circulation among its thinking men in their time, but for a revolution in its general modes of thought and investigation. These men, dissimilar in almost all else, agreed in being closet-students—secluded in a peculiar degree, by circumstances and character, from the business and intercourse of the world: and both were, through a large portion of their lives, regarded by those who took the lead in opinion (when they happened to hear of them) with feelings akin to contempt. But they were destined to renew a lesson given to mankind by every age, and always disregarded—to show that speculative philosophy, which to the superficial appears a thing so remote from the business of life and the outward interests of men, is in reality the thing on earth which most influences them, and in the long run overbears every other influence save those which it must itself obey. The writers of whom we speak have never been read by the multitude; except for the more slight of their works, their readers have been few: but they have been the teachers of the teachers; there is hardly to be found in England an individual of any importance

* *London and Westminster Review*, August 1838.

in the world of mind, who (whatever opinions he may have afterwards adopted) did not first learn to think from one of these two; and though their influences have but begun to diffuse themselves through these intermediate channels over society at large, there is already scarcely a publication of any consequence addressed to the educated classes, which, if these persons had not existed, would not have been different from what it is. These men are, Jeremy Bentham and Samuel Taylor Coleridge—the two great seminal minds of England in their age.

No comparison is intended here between the minds or influences of these remarkable men: this were impossible unless there were first formed a complete judgment of each, considered apart. It is our intention to attempt, on the present occasion, an estimate of one of them; the only one, a complete edition of whose works is yet in progress, and who, in the classification which may be made of all writers into Progressive and Conservative, belongs to the same division with ourselves. For although they were far too great men to be correctly designated by either appellation exclusively, yet in the main, Bentham was a Progressive philosopher, Coleridge a Conservative one. The influence of the former has made itself felt chiefly on minds of the Progressive class; of the latter, on those of the Conservative: and the two systems of concentric circles which the shock given by them is spreading over the ocean of mind, have only just begun to meet and intersect. The writings of both contain severe lessons to their own side, on many of the errors and faults they are addicted to: but to Bentham it was given to discern more particu-

larly those truths with which existing doctrines and institutions were at variance; to Coleridge, the neglected truths which lay *in* them.

A man of great knowledge of the world, and of the highest reputation for practical talent and sagacity among the official men of his time (himself no follower of Bentham, nor of any partial or exclusive school whatever) once said to us, as the result of his observation, that to Bentham more than to any other source might be traced the questioning spirit, the disposition to demand the *why* of everything, which had gained so much ground and was producing such important consequences in these times. The more this assertion is examined, the more true it will be found. Bentham has been in this age and country the great questioner of things established. It is by the influence of the modes of thought with which his writings inoculated a considerable number of thinking men, that the yoke of authority has been broken, and innumerable opinions, formerly received on tradition as incontestable, are put upon their defence, and required to give an account of themselves. Who, before Bentham, (whatever controversies might exist on points of detail,) dared to speak disrespectfully, in express terms, of the British Constitution, or the English Law? He did so; and his arguments and his example together encouraged others. We do not mean that his writings caused the Reform Bill, or that the Appropriation Clause owns him as its parent: the changes which have been made, and the greater changes which will be made, in our institutions, are not the work of philosophers,

but of the interests and instincts of large portions of society recently grown into strength. But Bentham gave voice to those interests and instincts: until he spoke out, those who found our institutions unsuited to them did not dare to say so, did not dare consciously to think so; they had never heard the excellence of those institutions questioned by cultivated men, by men of acknowledged intellect; and it is not in the nature of uninstructed minds to resist the united authority of the instructed. Bentham broke the spell. It was not Bentham by his own writings; it was Bentham through the minds and pens which those writings fed—through the men in more direct contact with the world, into whom his spirit passed. If the superstition about ancestorial wisdom has fallen into decay; if the public are grown familiar with the idea that their laws and institutions are in great part not the product of intellect and virtue, but of modern corruption grafted upon ancient barbarism; if the hardiest innovation is no longer scouted *because* it is an innovation—establishments no longer considered sacred because they are establishments—it will be found that those who have accustomed the public mind to these ideas have learnt them in Bentham's school, and that the assault on ancient institutions has been, and is, carried on for the most part with his weapons. It matters not although these thinkers, or indeed thinkers of any description, have been but scantily found among the persons prominently and ostensibly at the head of the Reform movement. All movements, except directly revolutionary ones, are headed, not by those who originate them, but by those who know best how to compromise between the old

opinions and the new. The father of English innovation, both in doctrines and in institutions, is Bentham: he is the great *subversive*, or, in the language of continental philosophers, the great *critical*, thinker of his age and country.

We consider this, however, to be not his highest title to fame. Were this all, he were only to be ranked among the lowest order of the potentates of mind—the negative, or destructive philosophers; those who can perceive what is false, but not what is true; who awaken the human mind to the inconsistencies and absurdities of time-sanctioned opinions and institutions, but substitute nothing in the place of what they take away. We have no desire to undervalue the services of such persons: mankind have been deeply indebted to them; nor will there ever be a lack of work for them, in a world in which so many false things are believed, in which so many which have been true, are believed long after they have ceased to be true. The qualities, however, which fit men for perceiving anomalies, without perceiving the truths which would rectify them, are not among the rarest of endowments. Courage, verbal acuteness, command over the forms of argumentation, and a popular style, will make, out of the shallowest man, with a sufficient lack of reverence, a considerable negative philosopher. Such men have never been wanting in periods of culture; and the period in which Bentham formed his early impressions was emphatically their reign, in proportion to its barrenness in the more noble products of the human mind. An age of formalism in the Church and corruption in the State, when the most valuable part of the meaning of traditional doctrines

had faded from the minds even of those who retained from habit a mechanical belief in them, was the time to raise up all kinds of sceptical philosophy. Accordingly, France had Voltaire, and his school of negative thinkers, and England (or rather Scotland) had the profoundest negative thinker on record, David Hume: a man, the peculiarities of whose mind qualified him to detect failure of proof, and want of logical consistency, at a depth which French sceptics, with their comparatively feeble powers of analysis and abstraction, stopt far short of, and which German subtlety alone could thoroughly appreciate, or hope to rival.

If Bentham had merely continued the work of Hume, he would scarcely have been heard of in philosophy; for he was far inferior to Hume in Hume's qualities, and was in no respect fitted to excel as a metaphysician. We must not look for subtlety, or the power of recondite analysis, among his intellectual characteristics. In the former quality, few great thinkers have ever been so deficient; and to find the latter, in any considerable measure, in a mind acknowledging any kindred with his, we must have recourse to the late Mr. Mill—a man who united the great qualities of the metaphysicians of the eighteenth century, with others of a different complexion, admirably qualifying him to complete and correct their work. Bentham had not these peculiar gifts; but he possessed others, not inferior, which were not possessed by any of his precursors; which have made him a source of light to a generation which has far outgrown their influence, and, as we called him, the chief subversive thinker of an age which has long lost all that they could subvert.

To speak of him first as a merely negative philosopher—as one who refutes illogical arguments, exposes sophistry, detects contradiction and absurdity; even in that capacity there was a wide field left vacant for him by Hume, and which he has occupied to an unprecedented extent; the field of practical abuses. This was Bentham's peculiar province: to this he was called by the whole bent of his disposition: to carry the warfare against absurdity into things practical. His was an essentially practical mind. It was by practical abuses that his mind was first turned to speculation—by the abuses of the profession which was chosen for him, that of the law. He has himself stated what particular abuse first gave that shock to his mind, the recoil of which has made the whole mountain of abuse totter; it was the custom of making the client pay for three attendances in the office of a Master in Chancery, when only one was given. The law, he found, on examination, was full of such things. But were these discoveries of his? No; they were known to every lawyer who practised, to every judge who sat on the bench, and neither before nor for long after did they cause any apparent uneasiness to the consciences of these learned persons, nor hinder them from asserting, whenever occasion offered, in books, in parliament, or on the bench, that the law was the perfection of reason. During so many generations, in each of which thousands of well-educated young men were successively placed in Bentham's position and with Bentham's opportunities, he alone was found with sufficient moral sensibility and self-reliance to say to himself that these things, however profitable they might be, were frauds, and that between them

and himself there should be a gulf fixed. To this rare union of self-reliance and moral sensibility we are indebted for all that Bentham has done. Sent to Oxford by his father at the unusually early age of fifteen—required, on admission, to declare his belief in the Thirty-nine Articles—he felt it necessary to examine them; and the examination suggested scruples, which he sought to get removed, but instead of the satisfaction he expected, was told that it was not for boys like him to set up their judgment against the great men of the Church. After a struggle, he signed; but the impression that he had done an immoral act, never left him; he considered himself to have committed a falsehood, and throughout life he never relaxed in his indignant denunciations of all laws which command such falsehoods, all institutions which attach rewards to them.

By thus carrying the war of criticism and refutation, the conflict with falsehood and absurdity, into the field of practical evils, Bentham, even if he had done nothing else, would have earned an important place in the history of intellect. He carried on the warfare without intermission. To this, not only many of his most piquant chapters, but some of the most finished of his entire works, are entirely devoted: the 'Defence of Usury;' the 'Book of Fallacies;' and the onslaught upon Blackstone, published anonymously under the title of 'A Fragment on Government,' which, though a first production, and of a writer afterwards so much ridiculed for his style, excited the highest admiration no less for its composition than for its thoughts, and was attributed by turns to Lord Mansfield, to Lord Camden, and (by Dr. Johnson) to

Dunning, one of the greatest masters of style among the lawyers of his day. These writings are altogether original; though of the negative school, they resemble nothing previously produced by negative philosophers; and would have sufficed to create for Bentham, among the subversive thinkers of modern Europe, a place peculiarly his own. But it is not these writings that constitute the real distinction between him and them. There was a deeper difference. It was that they were purely negative thinkers, he was positive: they only assailed error, he made it a point of conscience not to do so until he thought he could plant instead the corresponding truth. Their character was exclusively analytic, his was synthetic. They took for their starting-point the received opinion on any subject, dug round it with their logical implements, pronounced its foundations defective, and condemned it: he began *de novo*, laid his own foundations deeply and firmly, built up his own structure, and bade mankind compare the two; it was when he had solved the problem himself, or thought he had done so, that he declared all other solutions to be erroneous. Hence, what they produced will not last; it must perish, much of it has already perished, with the errors which it exploded: what he did has its own value, by which it must outlast all errors to which it is opposed. Though we may reject, as we often must, his practical conclusions, yet his premises, the collections of facts and observations from which his conclusions were drawn, remain for ever, a part of the materials of philosophy.

A place, therefore, must be assigned to Bentham among the masters of wisdom, the great teachers and

permanent intellectual ornaments of the human race. He is among those who have enriched mankind with imperishable gifts; and although these do not transcend all other gifts, nor entitle him to those honours 'above all Greek, above all Roman fame,' which by a natural reaction against the neglect and contempt of the world, many of his admirers were once disposed to accumulate upon him, yet to refuse an admiring recognition of what he was, on account of what he was not, is a much worse error, and one which, pardonable in the vulgar, is no longer permitted to any cultivated and instructed mind.

If we were asked to say, in the fewest possible words, what we conceive to be Bentham's place among these great intellectual benefactors of humanity; what he was, and what he was not; what kind of service he did and did not render to truth; we should say—he was not a great philosopher, but he was a great reformer in philosophy. He brought into philosophy something which it greatly needed, and for want of which it was at a stand. It was not his doctrines which did this, it was his mode of arriving at them. He introduced into morals and politics those habits of thought and modes of investigation, which are essential to the idea of science; and the absence of which made those departments of inquiry, as physics had been before Bacon, a field of interminable discussion, leading to no result. It was not his opinions, in short, but his method, that constituted the novelty and the value of what he did; a value beyond all price, even though we should reject the whole, as we unquestionably must a large part, of the opinions themselves.

Bentham's method may be shortly described as the

method of detail; of treating wholes by separating them into their parts, abstractions by resolving them into Things,—classes and generalities by distinguishing them into the individuals of which they are made up; and breaking every question into pieces before attempting to solve it. The precise amount of originality of this process, considered as a logical conception—its degree of connexion with the methods of physical science, or with the previous labours of Bacon, Hobbes, or Locke—is not an essential consideration in this place. Whatever originality there was in the method—in the subjects he applied it to, and in the rigidity with which he adhered to it, there was the greatest. Hence his interminable classifications. Hence his elaborate demonstrations of the most acknowledged truths. That murder, incendiarism, robbery, are mischievous actions, he will not take for granted without proof; let the thing appear ever so self-evident, he will know the why and the how of it with the last degree of precision; he will distinguish all the different mischiefs of a crime, whether of the *first*, the *second*, or the *third* order, namely, 1. the evil to the sufferer, and to his personal connexions; 2. the *danger* from example, and the *alarm* or painful feeling of insecurity; and 3. the discouragement to industry and useful pursuits arising from the *alarm*, and the trouble and resources which must be expended in warding off the *danger*. After this enumeration, he will prove from the laws of human feeling, that even the first of these evils, the sufferings of the immediate victim, will on the average greatly outweigh the pleasure reaped by the offender; much more when all the other evils

are taken into account. Unless this could be proved, he would account the infliction of punishment unwarrantable; and for taking the trouble to prove it formally, his defence is, 'there are truths which it is necessary to prove, not for their own sakes, because they are acknowledged, but that an opening may be made for the reception of other truths which depend upon them. It is in this manner we provide for the reception of first principles, which, once received, prepare the way for admission of all other truths.'* To which may be added, that in this manner also do we discipline the mind for practising the same sort of dissection upon questions more complicated and of more doubtful issue.

It is a sound maxim, and one which all close thinkers have felt, but which no one before Bentham ever so consistently applied, that error lurks in generalities: that the human mind is not capable of embracing a complex whole, until it has surveyed and catalogued the parts of which that whole is made up; that abstractions are not realities *per se*, but an abridged mode of expressing facts, and that the only practical mode of dealing with them is to trace them back to the facts (whether of experience or of consciousness) of which they are the expression. Proceeding on this principle, Bentham makes short work with the ordinary modes of moral and political reasoning. These, it appeared to him, when hunted to their source, for the most part terminated in *phrases*. In politics, liberty, social order, constitution, law of nature, social compact, &c. were the catch-

* Part I. pp. 161-2, of the collected edition.

words: ethics had its analogous ones. Such were the arguments on which the gravest questions of morality and policy were made to turn; not reasons, but allusions to reasons; sacramental expressions, by which a summary appeal was made to some general sentiment of mankind, or to some maxim in familiar use, which might be true or not, but the limitations of which no one had ever critically examined. And this satisfied other people; but not Bentham. He required something more than opinion as a reason for opinion. Whenever he found a *phrase* used as an argument for or against anything, he insisted upon knowing what it meant; whether it appealed to any standard, or gave intimation of any matter of fact relevant to the question; and if he could not find that it did either, he treated it as an attempt on the part of the disputant to impose his own individual sentiment on other people, without giving them a reason for it; a 'contrivance for avoiding the obligation of appealing to any external standard, and for prevailing upon the reader to accept of the author's sentiment and opinion as a reason, and that a sufficient one, for itself.' Bentham shall speak for himself on this subject: the passage is from his first systematic work, 'Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation,' and we could scarcely quote anything more strongly exemplifying both the strength and weakness of his mode of philosophizing.

'It is curious enough to observe the variety of inventions men have hit upon, and the variety of phrases they have brought forward, in order to conceal from the world, and, if possible, from themselves, this very general and therefore very pardonable self-sufficiency.

'1. One man says, he has a thing made on purpose to tell him what is right and what is wrong; and that is called a 'moral sense:' and then he goes to work at his ease, and says, such a thing is right, and such a thing is wrong—why? 'Because my moral sense tells me it is.'

'2. Another man comes and alters the phrase: leaving out *moral*, and putting in *common* in the room of it. He then tells you that his common sense tells him what is right and wrong, as surely as the other's moral sense did: meaning by common sense a sense of some kind or other, which, he says, is possessed by all mankind: the sense of those whose sense is not the same as the author's being struck out as not worth taking. This contrivance does better than the other; for a moral sense being a new thing, a man may feel about him a good while without being able to find it out: but common sense is as old as the creation; and there is no man but would be ashamed to be thought not to have as much of it as his neighbours. It has another great advantage: by appearing to share power, it lessens envy; for when a man gets up upon this ground, in order to anathematize those who differ from him, it is not by a *sic volo sic jubeo*, but by a *velitis jubeatis*.

'3. Another man comes, and says, that as to a moral sense indeed, he cannot find that he has any such thing: that, however, he has an *understanding*, which will do quite as well. This understanding, he says, is the standard of right and wrong: it tells him so and so. All good and wise men understand as he does: if other men's understandings differ in any part from his, so much the worse for them: it is a sure sign they are either defective or corrupt.

'4. Another man says, that there is an eternal and immutable Rule of Right: that that rule of right dictates so and so: and then he begins giving you his sentiments upon anything that comes uppermost: and these sentiments (you are to take for granted) are so many branches of the eternal rule of right.

'5. Another man, or perhaps the same man (it is no matter), says that there are certain practices conformable, and others repugnant, to the Fitness of Things; and then he tells you, at

his leisure, what practices are conformable, and what repugnant: just as he happens to like a practice or dislike it.

'6. A great multitude of people are continually talking of the Law of Nature; and then they go on giving you their sentiments about what is right and what is wrong: and these sentiments, you are to understand, are so many chapters and sections of the Law of Nature.

'7. Instead of the phrase, Law of Nature, you have sometimes Law of Reason, Right Reason, Natural Justice, Natural Equity, Good Order. Any of them will do equally well. This latter is most used in politics. The three last are much more tolerable than the others, because they do not very explicitly claim to be anything more than phrases: they insist but feebly upon the being looked upon as so many positive standards of themselves, and seem content to be taken, upon occasion, for phrases expressive of the conformity of the thing in question to the proper standard, whatever that may be. On most occasions, however, it will be better to say *utility*: *utility* is clearer, as referring more explicitly to pain and pleasure.

'8. We have one philosopher, who says, there is no harm in anything in the world but in telling a lie; and that, if, for example, you were to murder your own father, this would only be a particular way of saying, he was not your father. Of course when this philosopher sees anything that he does not like, he says, it is a particular way of telling a lie. It is saying, that the act ought to be done, or may be done, when, *in truth*, it ought not be done.

'9. The fairest and openest of them all is that sort of man who speaks out, and says, I am of the number of the Elect: now God himself takes care to inform the Elect what is right: and that with so good effect, that let them strive ever so, they cannot help not only knowing it but practising it. If therefore a man wants to know what is right and what is wrong, he has nothing to do but to come to me.'

Few will contend that this is a perfectly fair representation of the *animus* of those who employ the

various phrases so amusingly animadverted on; but that the phrases contain no argument, save what is grounded on the very feelings they are adduced to justify, is a truth which Bentham had the eminent merit of first pointing out.

It is the introduction into the philosophy of human conduct, of this method of detail—of this practice of never reasoning about wholes till they have been resolved into their parts, nor about abstractions till they have been translated into realities—that constitutes the originality of Bentham in philosophy, and makes him the great reformer of the moral and political branch of it. To what he terms the 'exhaustive method of classification,' which is but one branch of this more general method, he himself ascribes everything original in the systematic and elaborate work from which we have quoted. The generalities of his philosophy itself have little or no novelty: to ascribe any to the doctrine that general utility is the foundation of morality, would imply great ignorance of the history of philosophy, of general literature, and of Bentham's own writings. He derived the idea, as he says himself, from Helvetius; and it was the doctrine no less, of the religious philosophers of that age, prior to Reid and Beattie. We never saw an abler defence of the doctrine of utility than in a book written in refutation of Shaftesbury, and now little read—Brown's* 'Essays on the Characteristics;' and in Johnson's celebrated review of Soame Jenyns, the same doctrine is set forth as that both of the author and of the reviewer. In all ages of philosophy one

* Author of another book which made no little sensation when it first appeared,—'An Estimate of the Manners of the Times.'

of its schools has been utilitarian—not only from the time of Epicurus, but long before. It was by mere accident that this opinion became connected in Bentham with his peculiar method. The utilitarian philosophers antecedent to him had no more claims to the method than their antagonists. To refer, for instance, to the Epicurean philosophy, according to the most complete view we have of the moral part of it, by the most accomplished scholar of antiquity, Cicero; we ask any one who has read his philosophical writings, the 'De Finibus' for instance, whether the arguments of the Epicureans do not, just as much as those of the Stoics or Platonists, consist of mere rhetorical appeals to common notions, to εἰκότα and σημεῖα instead of τεκμήρια, notions picked up as it were casually, and when true at all, never so narrowly looked into as to ascertain in what sense and under what limitations they are true. The application of a real inductive philosophy to the problems of ethics, is as unknown to the Epicurean moralists as to any of the other schools; they never take a question to pieces, and join issue on a definite point. Bentham certainly did not learn his sifting and anatomizing method from them.

This method Bentham has finally installed in philosophy; has made it henceforth imperative on philosophers of all schools. By it he has formed the intellects of many thinkers, who either never adopted, or have abandoned many of his peculiar opinions. He has taught the method to men of the most opposite schools to his; he has made them perceive that if they do not test their doctrines by the method of detail, their adversaries will. He has thus, it is not

too much to say, for the first time introduced precision of thought into moral and political philosophy. Instead of taking up their opinions by intuition, or by ratiocination from premises adopted on a mere rough view, and couched in language so vague that it is impossible to say exactly whether they are true or false, philosophers are now forced to understand one another, to break down the generality of their propositions, and join a precise issue in every dispute. This is nothing less than a revolution in philosophy. Its effect is gradually becoming evident in the writings of English thinkers of every variety of opinion, and will be felt more and more in proportion as Bentham's writings are diffused, and as the number of minds to whose formation they contribute is multiplied.

It will naturally be presumed that of the fruits of this great philosophical improvement some portion at least will have been reaped by its author. Armed with such a potent instrument, and wielding it with such singleness of aim; cultivating the field of practical philosophy with such unwearied and such consistent use of a method right in itself, and not adopted by his predecessors; it cannot be but that Bentham by his own inquiries must have accomplished something considerable. And so, it will be found, he has; something not only considerable, but extraordinary; though but little compared with what he has left undone, and far short of what his sanguine and almost boyish fancy made him flatter himself that he had accomplished. His peculiar method, admirably calculated to make clear thinkers, and sure

ones to the extent of their materials, has not equal efficacy for making those materials complete. It is a security for accuracy, but not for comprehensiveness; or rather, it is a security for one sort of comprehensiveness, but not for another.

Bentham's method of laying out his subject is admirable as a preservative against one kind of narrow and partial views. He begins by placing before himself the whole of the field of inquiry to which the particular question belongs, and divides down till he arrives at the thing he is in search of; and thus by successively rejecting all which is *not* the thing, he gradually works out a definition of what it *is*. This, which he calls the exhaustive method, is as old as philosophy itself. Plato owes everything to it, and does everything by it; and the use made of it by that great man in his Dialogues, Bacon, in one of those pregnant logical hints scattered through his writings, and so much neglected by most of his pretended followers, pronounces to be the nearest approach to a true inductive method in the ancient philosophy. Bentham was probably not aware that Plato had anticipated him in the process to which he too declared that he owed everything. By the practice of it, his speculations are rendered eminently systematic and consistent; no question, with him, is ever an insulated one; he sees every subject in connexion with all the other subjects with which in his view it is related, and from which it requires to be distinguished; and as all that he knows, in the least degree allied to the subject, has been marshalled in an orderly manner before him, he does not, like people who use a looser method, forget and overlook a thing on one occasion

to remember it on another. Hence there is probably no philosopher of so wide a range, in whom there are so few inconsistencies. If any of the truths which he did not see, had come to be seen by him, he would have remembered it everywhere and at all times, and would have adjusted his whole system to it. And this is another admirable quality which he has impressed upon the best of the minds trained in his habits of thought: when those minds open to admit new truths, they digest them as fast as they receive them.

But this system, excellent for keeping before the mind of the thinker all that he knows, does not make him know enough; it does not make a knowledge of some of the properties of a thing suffice for the whole of it, nor render a rooted habit of surveying a complex object (though ever so carefully) in only one of its aspects, tantamount to the power of contemplating it in all. To give this last power, other qualities are required: whether Bentham possessed those other qualities we now have to see.

Bentham's mind, as we have already said, was eminently synthetical. He begins all his inquiries by supposing nothing to be known on the subject, and reconstructs all philosophy *ab initio*, without reference to the opinions of his predecessors. But to build either a philosophy or anything else, there must be materials. For the philosophy of matter, the materials are the properties of matter; for moral and political philosophy, the properties of man, and of man's position in the world. The knowledge which any inquirer possesses of these properties, constitutes a limit beyond which, as a moralist or a political philosopher, whatever be his powers of mind, he cannot

reach. Nobody's synthesis can be more complete than his analysis. If in his survey of human nature and life he has left any element out, then, wheresoever that element exerts any influence, his conclusions will fail, more or less, in their application. If he has left out many elements, and those very important, his labours may be highly valuable; he may have largely contributed to that body of partial truths which, when completed and corrected by one another, constitute practical truth; but the applicability of his system to practice in its own proper shape will be of an exceedingly limited range.

Human nature and human life are wide subjects, and whoever would embark in an enterprise requiring a thorough knowledge of them, has need both of large stores of his own, and of all aids and appliances from elsewhere. His qualifications for success will be proportional to two things: the degree in which his own nature and circumstances furnish him with a correct and complete picture of man's nature and circumstances; and his capacity of deriving light from other minds.

Bentham failed in deriving light from other minds. His writings contain few traces of the accurate knowledge of any schools of thinking but his own; and many proofs of his entire conviction that they could teach him nothing worth knowing. For some of the most illustrious of previous thinkers, his contempt was unmeasured. In almost the only passage of the 'Deontology' which, from its style, and from its having before appeared in print, may be known to be Bentham's, Socrates, and Plato are spoken of in terms distressing to his greatest admirers; and the incapa-

city to appreciate such men, is a fact perfectly in unison with the general habits of Bentham's mind. He had a phrase, expressive of the view he took of all moral speculations to which his method had not been applied, or (which he considered as the same thing) not founded on a recognition of utility as the moral standard; this phrase was 'vague generalities.' Whatever presented itself to him in such a shape, he dismissed as unworthy of notice, or dwelt upon only to denounce as absurd. He did not heed, or rather the nature of his mind prevented it from occurring to him, that these generalities contained the whole unanalysed experience of the human race.

Unless it can be asserted that mankind did not know anything until logicians taught it to them—that until the last hand has been put to a moral truth by giving it a metaphysically precise expression, all the previous rough-hewing which it has undergone by the common intellect at the suggestion of common wants and common experience is to go for nothing; it must be allowed, that even the originality which can, and the courage which dares, think for itself, is not a more necessary part of the philosophical character than a thoughtful regard for previous thinkers, and for the collective mind of the human race. What has been the opinion of mankind, has been the opinion of persons of all tempers and dispositions, of all partialities and prepossessions, of all varieties in position, in education, in opportunities of observation and inquiry. No one inquirer is all this; every inquirer is either young or old, rich or poor, sickly or healthy, married or unmarried, meditative or active, a poet or a logician, an ancient or a modern, a man or a woman; and if a

thinking person, has, in addition, the accidental peculiarities of his individual modes of thought. Every circumstance which gives a character to the life of a human being, carries with it its peculiar biasses; its peculiar facilities for perceiving some things, and for missing or forgetting others. But, from points of view different from his, different things are perceptible; and none are more likely to have seen what he does not see, than those who do not see what he sees. The general opinion of mankind is the average of the conclusions of all minds, stripped indeed of their choicest and most recondite thoughts, but freed from their twists and partialities: a net result, in which everybody's particular point of view is represented, nobody's predominant. The collective mind does not penetrate below the surface, but it sees all the surface; which profound thinkers, even by reason of their profundity, often fail to do: their intenser view of a thing in some of its aspects diverting their attention from others.

The hardiest assertor, therefore, of the freedom of private judgment—the keenest detector of the errors of his predecessors, and of the inaccuracies of current modes of thought—is the very person who most needs to fortify the weak side of his own intellect, by study of the opinions of mankind in all ages and nations, and of the speculations of philosophers of the modes of thought most opposite to his own. It is there that he will find the experiences denied to himself—the remainder of the truth of which he sees but half—the truths, of which the errors he detects are commonly but the exaggerations. If, like Bentham, he brings with him an improved instrument of investigation,

the greater is the probability that he will find ready prepared a rich abundance of rough ore, which was merely waiting for that instrument. A man of clear ideas errs grievously if he imagines that whatever is seen confusedly does not exist: it belongs to him, when he meets with such a thing, to dispel the mist, and fix the outlines of the vague form which is looming through it.

Bentham's contempt, then, of all other schools of thinkers; his determination to create a philosophy wholly out of the materials furnished by his own mind, and by minds like his own; was his first disqualification as a philosopher. His second, was the incompleteness of his own mind as a representative of universal human nature. In many of the most natural and strongest feelings of human nature he had no sympathy; from many of its graver experiences he was altogether cut off; and the faculty by which one mind understands a mind different from itself, and throws itself into the feelings of that other mind, was denied him by his deficiency of Imagination.

With Imagination in the popular sense, command of imagery and metaphorical expression, Bentham was, to a certain degree, endowed. For want, indeed, of poetical culture, the images with which his fancy supplied him were seldom beautiful, but they were quaint and humorous, or bold, forcible, and intense: passages might be quoted from him both of playful irony, and of declamatory eloquence, seldom surpassed in the writings of philosophers. The Imagination which he had not, was that to which the name is generally appropriated by the best writers of the present day;

that which enables us, by a voluntary effort, to conceive the absent as if it were present, the imaginary as if it were real, and to clothe it in the feelings which, if it were indeed real, it would bring along with it. This is the power by which one human being enters into the mind and circumstances of another. This power constitutes the poet, in so far as he does anything but melodiously utter his own actual feelings. It constitutes the dramatist entirely. It is one of the constituents of the historian; by it we understand other times; by it Guizot interprets to us the middle ages; Nisard, in his beautiful Studies on the later Latin poets, places us in the Rome of the Cæsars; Michelet disengages the distinctive characters of the different races and generations of mankind from the facts of their history. Without it nobody knows even his own nature, further than circumstances have actually tried it and called it out; nor the nature of his fellow-creatures, beyond such generalizations as he may have been enabled to make from his observation of their outward conduct.

By these limits, accordingly, Bentham's knowledge of human nature is bounded. It is wholly empirical; and the empiricism of one who has had little experience. He had neither internal experience nor external; the quiet, even tenor of his life, and his healthiness of mind, conspired to exclude him from both. He never knew prosperity and adversity, passion nor satiety: he never had even the experiences which sickness gives; he lived from childhood to the age of eighty-five in boyish health. He knew no dejection, no heaviness of heart. He never felt life a sore and a weary burthen. He was a boy

to the last. Self-consciousness, that dæmon of the men of genius of our time, from Wordsworth to Byron, from Goethe to Chateaubriand, and to which this age owes so much both of its cheerful and its mournful wisdom, never was awakened in him. How much of human nature slumbered in him he knew not, neither can we know. He had never been made alive to the unseen influences which were acting on himself, nor consequently on his fellow-creatures. Other ages and other nations were a blank to him for purposes of instruction. He measured them but by one standard; their knowledge of facts, and their capability to take correct views of utility, and merge all other objects in it. His own lot was cast in a generation of the leanest and barrenest men whom England had yet produced, and he was an old man when a better race came in with the present century. He saw accordingly in man little but what the vulgarest eye can see; recognised no diversities of character, but such as he who runs may read. Knowing so little of human feelings, he knew still less of the influences by which those feelings are formed: all the more subtle workings both of the mind upon itself, and of external things upon the mind, escaped him; and no one, probably, who, in a highly instructed age, ever attempted to give a rule to all human conduct, set out with a more limited conception either of the agencies by which human conduct *is*, or of those by which it *should* be, influenced.

This, then, is our idea of Bentham. He was a man both of remarkable endowments for philosophy, and of remarkable deficiencies for it: fitted, beyond almost any man, for drawing from his premises, conclusions

not only correct, but sufficiently precise and specific to be practical: but whose general conception of human nature and life, furnished him with an unusually slender stock of premises. It is obvious what would be likely to be achieved by such a man; what a thinker, thus gifted and thus disqualified, could do in philosophy. He could, with close and accurate logic, hunt half-truths to their consequences and practical applications, on a scale both of greatness and of minuteness not previously exemplified; and this is the character which posterity will probably assign to Bentham.

We express our sincere and well-considered conviction when we say, that there is hardly anything positive in Bentham's philosophy which is not true: that when his practical conclusions are erroneous, which in our opinion they are very often, it is not because the considerations which he urges are not rational and valid in themselves, but because some more important principle, which he did not perceive, supersedes those considerations, and turns the scale. The bad part of his writings is his resolute denial of all that he does not see, of all truths but those which he recognises. By that alone has he exercised any bad influence upon his age; by that he has, not created a school of deniers, for this is an ignorant prejudice, but put himself at the head of the school which exists always, though it does not always find a great man to give it the sanction of philosophy: thrown the mantle of intellect over the natural tendency of men in all ages to deny or disparage all feelings and mental states of which they have no consciousness in themselves.

The truths which are not Bentham's, which his philosophy takes no account of, are many and important; but his non-recognition of them does not put them out of existence; they are still with us, and it is a comparatively easy task that is reserved for us, to harmonize those truths with his. To reject his half of the truth because he overlooked the other half, would be to fall into his error without having his excuse. For our own part, we have a large tolerance for one-eyed men, provided their one eye is a penetrating one: if they saw more, they probably would not see so keenly, nor so eagerly pursue one course of inquiry. Almost all rich veins of original and striking speculation have been opened by systematic half-thinkers: though whether these new thoughts drive out others as good, or are peacefully superadded to them, depends on whether these half-thinkers are or are not followed in the same track by complete thinkers. The field of man's nature and life cannot be too much worked, or in too many directions; until every clod is turned up the work is imperfect; no whole truth is possible but by combining the points of view of all the fractional truths, nor, therefore, until it has been fully seen what each fractional truth can do by itself.

What Bentham's fractional truths could do; there is no such good means of showing as by a review of his philosophy: and such a review, though inevitably a most brief and general one, it is now necessary to attempt.

The first question in regard to any man of speculation is, what is his theory of human life? In the

minds of many philosophers, whatever theory they have of this sort is latent, and it would be a revelation to themselves to have it pointed out to them in their writings as others can see it, unconsciously moulding everything to its own likeness. But Bentham always knew his own premises, and made his reader know them: it was not his custom to leave the theoretic grounds of his practical conclusions to conjecture. Few great thinkers have afforded the means of assigning with so much certainty the exact conception which they had formed of man and of man's life.

Man is conceived by Bentham as a being susceptible of pleasures and pains, and governed in all his conduct partly by the different modifications of self-interest, and the passions commonly classed as selfish, partly by sympathies, or occasionally antipathies, towards other beings. And here Bentham's conception of human nature stops. He does not exclude religion; the prospect of divine rewards and punishments he includes under the head of 'self-regarding interest,' and the devotional feeling under that of sympathy with God. But the whole of the impelling or restraining principles, whether of this or of another world, which he recognises, are either self-love, or love or hatred towards other sentient beings. That there might be no doubt of what he thought on the subject, he has not left us to the general evidence of his writings, but has drawn out a 'Table of the Springs of Action,' an express enumeration and classification of human motives, with their various names, laudatory, vituperative, and neutral: and this table, to be found in Part I. of his collected works, we

recommend to the study of those who would understand his philosophy.

Man is never recognised by him as a being capable of pursuing spiritual perfection as an end; of desiring, for its own sake, the conformity of his own character to his standard of excellence, without hope of good or fear of evil from other source than his own inward consciousness. Even in the more limited form of Conscience, this great fact in human nature escapes him. Nothing is more curious than the absence of recognition in any of his writings of the existence of conscience, as a thing distinct from philanthropy, from affection for God or man, and from self-interest in this world or in the next. There is a studied abstinence from any of the phrases which, in the mouths of others, import the acknowledgment of such a fact.* If we find the words 'Conscience,' 'Principle,' 'Moral Rectitude,' 'Moral Duty,' in his Table of the Springs of Action, it is among the synonymes of the 'love of reputation;' with an intimation as to the two former phrases, that they are also sometimes synonymous with the *religious* motive, or the motive of *sympathy*. The feeling of moral approbation or disapprobation properly so called, either towards ourselves or our fellow-creatures, he seems unaware of the existence of; and neither the word *self-respect*, nor the idea to which that word is appropriated, occurs even once, so far as our recollection serves us, in his whole writings.

* In a passage in the last volume of his book on Evidence, and possibly in one or two other places, the 'love of justice' is spoken of as a feeling inherent in almost all mankind. It is impossible, without explanations now unattainable, to ascertain what sense is to be put upon casual expressions so inconsistent with the general tenor of his philosophy.

Nor is it only the moral part of man's nature, in the strict sense of the term—the desire of perfection, or the feeling of an approving or of an accusing conscience—that he overlooks; he but faintly recognises, as a fact in human nature, the pursuit of any other ideal end for its own sake. The sense of *honour*, and personal dignity—that feeling of personal exaltation and degradation which acts independently of other people's opinion, or even in defiance of it; the love of *beauty*, the passion of the artist; the love of *order*, of congruity, of consistency in all things, and conformity to their end; the love of *power*, not in the limited form of power over other human beings, but abstract power, the power of making our volitions effectual; the love of *action*, the thirst for movement and activity, a principle scarcely of less influence in human life than its opposite, the love of ease:—None of these powerful constituents of human nature are thought worthy of a place among the 'Springs of Action;' and though there is possibly no one of them of the existence of which an acknowledgment might not be found in some corner of Bentham's writings, no conclusions are ever founded on the acknowledgment. Man, that most complex being, is a very simple one in his eyes. Even under the head of *sympathy*, his recognition does not extend to the more complex forms of the feeling—the love of *loving*, the need of a sympathising support, or of objects of admiration and reverence. If he thought at all of any of the deeper feelings of human nature, it was but as idiosyncrasies of taste, with which the moralist no more than the legislator had any concern, further than to prohibit such as were mischievous among the

actions to which they might chance to lead. To say either that man should, or that he should not, take pleasure in one thing, displeasure in another, appeared to him as much an act of despotism in the moralist as in the political ruler.

It would be most unjust to Bentham to surmise (as narrow-minded and passionate adversaries are apt in such cases to do) that this picture of human nature was copied from himself; that all those constituents of humanity which he rejected from his table of motives, were wanting in his own breast. The unusual strength of his early feelings of virtue, was, as we have seen, the original cause of all his speculations; and a noble sense of morality, and especially of justice, guides and pervades them all. But having been early accustomed to keep before his mind's eye the happiness of mankind (or rather of the whole sentient world), as the only thing desirable in itself, or which rendered anything else desirable, he confounded all disinterested feelings which he found in himself, with the desire of general happiness: just as some religious writers, who loved virtue for its own sake as much perhaps as men could do, habitually confounded their love of virtue with their fear of hell. It would have required greater subtlety than Bentham possessed, to distinguish from each other, feelings which, from long habit, always acted in the same direction; and his want of imagination prevented him from reading the distinction, where it is legible enough, in the hearts of others.

Accordingly, he has not been followed in this grand oversight by any of the able men who, from the extent of their intellectual obligations to him, have been

regarded as his disciples. They may have followed him in his doctrine of utility, and in his rejection of a moral sense as the test of right and wrong: but while repudiating it as such, they have, with Hartley, acknowledged it as a fact in human nature; they have endeavoured to account for it, to assign its laws: nor are they justly chargeable either with undervaluing this part of our nature, or with any disposition to throw it into the background of their speculations. If any part of the influence of this cardinal error has extended itself to them, it is circuitously, and through the effect on their minds of other parts of Bentham's doctrines.

Sympathy, the only disinterested motive which Bentham recognised, he felt the inadequacy of, except in certain limited cases, as a security for virtuous action. Personal affection, he well knew, is as liable to operate to the injury of third parties, and requires as much to be kept under government, as any other feeling whatever: and general philanthropy, considered as a motive influencing mankind in general, he estimated at its true value when divorced from the feeling of duty—as the very weakest and most unsteady of all feelings. There remained, as a motive by which mankind are influenced, and by which they may be guided to their good, only personal interest. Accordingly, Bentham's idea of the world is that of a collection of persons pursuing each his separate interest or pleasure, and the prevention of whom from jostling one another more than is unavoidable, may be attempted by hopes and fears derived from three sources—the law, religion, and public opinion. To these three powers, considered as binding human

conduct, he gave the name of *sanctions*: the *political* sanction, operating by the rewards and penalties of the law; the *religious* sanction, by those expected from the Ruler of the Universe; and the *popular*, which he characteristically calls also the *moral* sanction, operating through the pains and pleasures arising from the favour or disfavour of our fellow-creatures.

Such is Bentham's theory of the world. And now, in a spirit neither of apology nor of censure, but of calm appreciation, we are to inquire how far this view of human nature and life will carry any one:—how much it will accomplish in morals, and how much in political and social philosophy: what it will do for the individual, and what for society.

It will do nothing for the conduct of the individual, beyond prescribing some of the more obvious dictates of worldly prudence, and outward probity and beneficence. There is no need to expatiate on the deficiencies of a system of ethics which does not pretend to aid individuals in the formation of their own character; which recognises no such wish as that of self-culture, we may even say no such power, as existing in human nature; and if it did recognise, could furnish little assistance to that great duty, because it overlooks the existence of about half of the whole number of mental feelings which human beings are capable of, including all those of which the direct objects are states of their own mind.

Morality consists of two parts. One of these is self-education; the training, by the human being himself, of his affections and will. That department is a blank in Bentham's system. The other and co-

equal part, the regulation of his outward actions, must be altogether halting and imperfect without the first: for how can we judge in what manner many an action will affect even the worldly interests of ourselves or others, unless we take in, as part of the question, its influence on the regulation of our, or their, affections and desires? A moralist on Bentham's principles may get as far as this, that he ought not to slay, burn, or steal; but what will be his qualifications for regulating the nicer shades of human behaviour, or for laying down even the greater moralities as to those facts in human life which are liable to influence the depths of the character quite independently of any influence on worldly circumstances—such, for instance, as the sexual relations, or those of family in general, or any other social and sympathetic connexions of an intimate kind? The moralities of these questions depend essentially on considerations which Bentham never so much as took into the account; and when he happened to be in the right, it was always, and necessarily, on wrong or insufficient grounds.

It is fortunate for the world that Bentham's taste lay rather in the direction of jurisprudential than of properly ethical inquiry. Nothing expressly of the latter kind has been published under his name, except the 'Deontology'—a book scarcely ever, in our experience, alluded to by any admirer of Bentham without deep regret that it ever saw the light. We did not expect from Bentham correct systematic views of ethics, or a sound treatment of any question the moralities of which require a profound knowledge of the human heart; but we did anticipate that the greater moral questions would have been boldly

plunged into, and at least a searching criticism produced of the received opinions; we did not expect that the *petite morale* almost alone would have been treated, and that with the most pedantic minuteness, and on the *quid pro quo* principles which regulate trade. The book has not even the value which would belong to an authentic exhibition of the legitimate consequences of an erroneous line of thought; for the style proves it to have been so entirely rewritten, that it is impossible to tell how much or how little of it is Bentham's. The collected edition, now in progress, will not, it is said, include Bentham's religious writings; these, although we think most of them of exceedingly small value, are at least his, and the world has a right to whatever light they throw upon the constitution of his mind. But the omission of the 'Deontology' would be an act of editorial discretion which we should deem entirely justifiable.

If Bentham's theory of life can do so little for the individual, what can it do for society?

It will enable a society which has attained a certain state of spiritual development, and the maintenance of which in that state is otherwise provided for, to prescribe the rules by which it may protect its material interests. It will do nothing (except sometimes as an instrument in the hands of a higher doctrine) for the spiritual interests of society; nor does it suffice of itself even for the material interests. That which alone causes any material interests to exist, which alone enables any body of human beings to exist as a society, is national character: *that* it is, which causes one nation to succeed in what it attempts, another to fail; one nation to understand and aspire

to elevated things, another to grovel in mean ones; which makes the greatness of one nation lasting, and dooms another to early and rapid decay. The true teacher of the fitting social arrangements for England, France, or America, is the one who can point out how the English, French, or American character can be improved, and how it has been made what it is. A philosophy of laws and institutions, not founded on a philosophy of national character, is an absurdity. But what could Bentham's opinion be worth on national character? How could he, whose mind contained so few and so poor types of individual character, rise to that higher generalization? All he can do is but to indicate means by which, in any given state of the national mind, the material interests of society can be protected; saving the question, of which others must judge, whether the use of those means would have, on the national character, any injurious influence.

We have arrived, then, at a sort of estimate of what a philosophy like Bentham's can do. It can teach the means of organizing and regulating the merely *business* part of the social arrangements. Whatever can be understood or whatever done without reference to moral influences, his philosophy is equal to; where those influences require to be taken into account, it is at fault. He committed the mistake of supposing that the business part of human affairs was the whole of them; all at least that the legislator and the moralist had to do with. Not that he disregarded moral influences when he perceived them; but his want of imagination, small experience of human feelings, and ignorance of the filiation and connexion of feelings with one another, made this rarely the case.

The business part is accordingly the only province of human affairs which Bentham has cultivated with any success; into which he has introduced any considerable number of comprehensive and luminous practical principles. That is the field of his greatness; and there he is indeed great. He has swept away the accumulated cobwebs of centuries—he has untied knots which the efforts of the ablest thinkers, age after age, had only drawn tighter; and it is no exaggeration to say of him that over a great part of the field he was the first to shed the light of reason.

We turn with pleasure from what Bentham could not do, to what he did. It is an ungracious task to call a great benefactor of mankind to account for not being a greater—to insist upon the errors of a man who has originated more new truths, has given to the world more sound practical lessons, than it ever received, except in a few glorious instances, from any other individual. The unpleasing part of our work is ended. We are now to show the greatness of the man; the grasp which his intellect took of the subjects with which it was fitted to deal; the giant's task which was before him, and the hero's courage and strength with which he achieved it. Nor let that which he did be deemed of small account because its province was limited: man has but the choice to go a little way in many paths, or a great way in only one. The field of Bentham's labours was like the space between two parallel lines; narrow to excess in one direction, in another it reached to infinity.

Bentham's speculations, as we are already aware, began with law; and in that department he accom-

plished his greatest triumphs. He found the philosophy of law a chaos, he left it a science: he found the practice of the law an Augean stable, he turned the river into it which is mining and sweeping away mound after mound of its rubbish.

Without joining in the exaggerated invectives against lawyers, which Bentham sometimes permitted to himself, or making one portion of society alone accountable for the fault of all, we may say that circumstances had made English lawyers in a peculiar degree liable to the reproach of Voltaire, who defines lawyers the 'conservators of ancient barbarous usages.' The basis of the English law was, and still is, the feudal system. That system, like all those which existed as custom before they were established as law, possessed a certain degree of suitableness to the wants of the society among whom it grew up—that is to say, of a tribe of rude soldiers, holding a conquered people in subjection, and dividing its spoils among themselves. Advancing civilization had, however, converted this armed encampment of barbarous warriors in the midst of enemies reduced to slavery, into an industrious, commercial, rich, and free people. The laws which were suitable to the first of these states of society, could have no manner of relation to the circumstances of the second; which could not even have come into existence unless something had been done to adapt those laws to it. But the adaptation was not the result of thought and design; it arose not from any comprehensive consideration of the new state of society and its exigencies. What was done, was done by a struggle of centuries between the old barbarism and the new civilization; between the feudal

aristocracy of conquerors, holding fast to the rude system they had established, and the conquered effecting their emancipation. The last was the growing power, but was never strong enough to break its bonds, though ever and anon some weak point gave way. Hence the law came to be like the costume of a full-grown man who had never put off the clothes made for him when he first went to school. Band after band had burst, and, as the rent widened, then, without removing anything except what might drop off of itself, the hole was darned, or patches of fresh law were brought from the nearest shop and stuck on. Hence all ages of English history have given one another rendezvous in English law; their several products may be seen all together, not interfused, but heaped one upon another, as many different ages of the earth may be read in some perpendicular section of its surface—the deposits of each successive period not substituted but superimposed on those of the preceding. And in the world of law no less than in the physical world, every commotion and conflict of the elements has left its mark behind in some break or irregularity of the strata: every struggle which ever rent the bosom of society is apparent in the disjointed condition of the part of the field of law which covers the spot: nay, the very traps and pitfalls which one contending party set for another are still standing, and the teeth not of hyenas only, but of foxes and all cunning animals, are imprinted on the curious remains found in these antediluvian caves.

In the English law, as in the Roman before it, the adaptations of barbarous laws to the growth of civilized society were made chiefly by stealth. They were

generally made by the courts of justice, who could not help reading the new wants of mankind in the cases between man and man which came before them; but who, having no authority to make new laws for those new wants, were obliged to do the work covertly, and evade the jealousy and opposition of an ignorant, prejudiced, and for the most part brutal and tyrannical legislature. Some of the most necessary of these improvements, such as the giving force of law to trusts, and the breaking up of entails, were effected in actual opposition to the strongly-declared will of Parliament, whose clumsy hands, no match for the astuteness of judges, could not, after repeated trials, manage to make any law which the judges could not find a trick for rendering inoperative. The whole history of the contest about trusts may still be read in the words of a conveyance, as could the contest about entails, till the abolition of fine and recovery by a bill of the present Attorney-General; but dearly did the client pay for the cabinet of historical curiosities which he was obliged to purchase every time that he made a settlement of his estate. The result of this mode of improving social institutions was, that whatever new things were done had to be done in consistency with old forms and names; and the laws were improved with much the same effect as if, in the improvement of agriculture, the plough could only have been introduced by making it look like a spade; or as if, when the primeval practice of ploughing by the horse's tail gave way to the innovation of harness, the tail, for form's sake, had still remained attached to the plough.

When the conflicts were over, and the mixed mass

settled down into something like a fixed state, and that state a very profitable and therefore a very agreeable one to lawyers, they, following the natural tendency of the human mind, began to theorise upon it, and, in obedience to necessity, had to digest it and give it a systematic form. It was from this thing of shreds and patches, in which the only part that approached to order or system was the early barbarous part, already more than half superseded, that English lawyers had to construct, by induction and abstraction, their philosophy of law; and without the logical habits and general intellectual cultivation which the lawyers of the Roman empire brought to a similar task. Bentham found the philosophy of law what English practising lawyers had made it; a jumble, in which *real* and *personal* property, *law* and *equity*, *felony*, *premunire*, *misprision*, and *misdemeanour*, words without a vestige of meaning when detached from the history of English institutions—mere tide-marks to point out the line which the sea and the shore, in their secular struggles, had adjusted as their mutual boundary—all passed for distinctions inherent in the nature of things; in which every absurdity, every lucrative abuse, had a reason found for it—a reason which only now and then even pretended to be drawn from expediency; most commonly a technical reason, one of mere form, derived from the old barbarous system. While the theory of the law was in this state, to describe what the practice of it was would require the pen of a Swift, or of Bentham himself. The whole progress of a suit at law seemed like a series of contrivances for lawyers' profit, in which the suitors were regarded as the prey; and if the poor

were not the helpless victims of every Sir Giles Overreach who could pay the price, they might thank opinion and manners for it, not the law.

It may be fancied by some people that Bentham did an easy thing in merely calling all this absurd, and proving it to be so. But he began the contest a young man, and he had grown old before he had any followers. History will one day refuse to give credit to the intensity of the superstition which, till very lately, protected this mischievous mess from examination or doubt—passed off the charming representations of Blackstone for a just estimate of the English law, and proclaimed the shame of human reason to be the perfection of it. Glory to Bentham that he has dealt to this superstition its deathblow—that he has been the Hercules of this hydra, the St. George of this pestilent dragon! The honour is all his—nothing but his peculiar qualities could have done it. There were wanted his indefatigable perseverance, his firm self-reliance, needing no support from other men's opinion; his intensely practical turn of mind, his synthetical habits—above all, his peculiar method. Metaphysicians, armed with vague generalities, had often tried their hands at the subject, and left it no more advanced than they found it. Law is a matter of business; means and ends are the things to be considered in it, not abstractions: vagueness was not to be met by vagueness, but by definiteness and precision: details were not to be encountered with generalities, but with details. Nor could any progress be made, on such a subject, by merely showing that existing things were bad; it was necessary also to show how they might be made better. No great

man whom we read of was qualified to do this thing except Bentham. He has done it, once and for ever.

Into the particulars of what Bentham has done we cannot enter: many hundred pages would be required to give a tolerable abstract of it. To sum up our estimate under a few heads. First: he has expelled mysticism from the philosophy of law, and set the example of viewing laws in a practical light, as means to certain definite and precise ends. Secondly: he has cleared up the confusion and vagueness attaching to the idea of law in general, to the idea of a body of laws, and all the general ideas therein involved. Thirdly: he demonstrated the necessity and practicability of *codification*, or the conversion of all law into a written and systematically arranged code: not like the Code Napoleon, a code without a single definition, requiring a constant reference to anterior precedent for the meaning of its technical terms; but one containing within itself all that is necessary for its own interpretation, together with a perpetual provision for its own emendation and improvement. He has shown of what parts such a code would consist; the relation of those parts to one another; and by his distinctions and classifications has done very much towards showing what should be, or might be, its nomenclature and arrangement. What he has left undone, he has made it comparatively easy for others to do. Fourthly: he has taken a systematic view* of the exigencies of society for which the civil code is intended to provide, and of the principles of human nature by which its provisions are to be tested:

* See the 'Principles of Civil Law,' contained in Part II. of his collected works.

and this view, defective (as we have already intimated) wherever spiritual interests require to be taken into account, is excellent for that large portion of the laws of any country which are designed for the protection of material interests. Fifthly: (to say nothing of the subject of punishment, for which something considerable had been done before) he found the philosophy of judicial procedure, including that of judicial establishments and of evidence, in a more wretched state than even any other part of the philosophy of law; he carried it at once almost to perfection. He left it with every one of its principles established, and little remaining to be done even in the suggestion of practical arrangements.

These assertions in behalf of Bentham may be left, without fear for the result, in the hands of those who are competent to judge of them. There are now even in the highest seats of justice, men to whom the claims made for him will not appear extravagant. Principle after principle of those propounded by him is moreover making its way by infiltration into the understandings most shut against his influence, and driving nonsense and prejudice from one corner of them to another. The reform of the laws of any country according to his principles, can only be gradual, and may be long ere it is accomplished; but the work is in progress, and both parliament and the judges are every year doing something, and often something not inconsiderable, towards the forwarding of it.

It seems proper here to take notice of an accusation sometimes made both against Bentham and against the principle of codification—as if they re-

quired one uniform suit of ready-made laws for all times and all states of society. The doctrine of codification, as the word imports, relates to the form only of the laws, not their substance; it does not concern itself with what the laws should be, but declares that whatever they are, they ought to be systematically arranged, and fixed down to a determinate form of words. To the accusation, so far as it affects Bentham, one of the essays in the collection of his works (then for the first time published in English) is a complete answer: that 'On the Influence of Time and Place in Matters of Legislation.' It may there be seen that the different exigencies of different nations with respect to law, occupied his attention as systematically as any other portion of the wants which render laws necessary: with the limitations, it is true, which were set to all his speculations by the imperfections of his theory of human nature. For, taking, as we have seen, next to no account of national character and the causes which form and maintain it, he was precluded from considering, except to a very limited extent, the laws of a country as an instrument of national culture: one of their most important aspects, and in which they must of course vary according to the degree and kind of culture already attained; as a tutor gives his pupil different lessons according to the progress already made in his education. The same laws would not have suited our wild ancestors, accustomed to rude independence, and a people of Asiatics bowed down by military despotism: the slave needs to be trained to govern himself, the savage to submit to the government of others. The same laws will not suit the English, who distrust everything which

emanates from general principles, and the French, who distrust whatever does not so emanate. Very different institutions are needed to train to the perfection of their nature, or to constitute into a united nation and social polity, an essentially *subjective* people like the Germans, and an essentially *objective* people like those of Northern and Central Italy; the one affectionate and dreamy, the other passionate and worldly; the one trustful and loyal, the other calculating and suspicious; the one not practical enough, the other overmuch; the one wanting individuality, the other fellow-feeling; the one failing for want of exacting enough for itself, the other for want of conceding enough to others. Bentham was little accustomed to look at institutions in their relation to these topics. The effects of this oversight must of course be perceptible throughout his speculations, but we do not think the errors into which it led him very material in the greater part of civil and penal law: it is in the department of constitutional legislation that they were fundamental.

The Benthamic theory of government has made so much noise in the world of late years; it has held such a conspicuous place among Radical philosophies, and Radical modes of thinking have participated so much more largely than any others in its spirit, that many worthy persons imagine there is no other Radical philosophy extant. Leaving such people to discover their mistake as they may, we shall expend a few words in attempting to discriminate between the truth and error of this celebrated theory.

There are three great questions in government. First, to what authority is it for the good of the people that they should be subject? Secondly, how

are they to be induced to obey that authority? The answers to these two questions vary indefinitely, according to the degree and kind of civilization and cultivation already attained by a people, and their peculiar aptitudes for receiving more. Comes next a third question, not liable to so much variation, namely, by what means are the abuses of this authority to be checked? This third question is the only one of the three to which Bentham seriously applies himself, and he gives it the only answer it admits of—Responsibility: responsibility to persons whose interest, whose obvious and recognisable interest, accords with the end in view—good government. This being granted, it is next to be asked, in what body of persons this identity of interest with good government, that is, with the interest of the whole community, is to be found? In nothing less, says Bentham, than the numerical majority: nor, say we, even in the numerical majority itself; of no portion of the community less than all, will the interest coincide, at all times and in all respects, with the interest of all. But, since power given to all, by a representative government, is in fact given to a majority; we are obliged to fall back upon the first of our three questions, namely, under what authority is it for the good of the people that they be placed? And if to this the answer be, under that of a majority among themselves, Bentham's system cannot be questioned. This one assumption being made, his 'Constitutional Code' is admirable. That extraordinary power which he possessed, of at once seizing comprehensive principles, and scheming out minute details, is brought into play with surpassing vigour in devising means for pre-

venting rulers from escaping from the control of the majority; for enabling and inducing the majority to exercise that control unremittingly; and for providing them with servants of every desirable endowment, moral and intellectual, compatible with entire subservience to their will.

But *is* this fundamental doctrine of Bentham's political philosophy an universal truth? Is it, at all times and places, good for mankind to be under the absolute authority of the majority of themselves? We say the authority, not the political authority merely, because it is chimerical to suppose that whatever has absolute power over men's bodies will not arrogate it over their minds—will not seek to control (not perhaps by legal penalties, but by the persecutions of society) opinions and feelings which depart from its standard; will not attempt to shape the education of the young by its model, and to extinguish all books, all schools, all combinations of individuals for joint action upon society, which may be attempted for the purpose of keeping alive a spirit at variance with its own. Is it, we say, the proper condition of man, in all ages and nations, to be under the despotism of Public Opinion?

It is very conceivable that such a doctrine should find acceptance from some of the noblest spirits, in a time of reaction against the aristocratic governments of modern Europe; governments founded on the entire sacrifice (except so far as prudence, and sometimes humane feeling interfere) of the community generally, to the self-interest and ease of a few. European reformers have been accustomed to see the numerical majority everywhere unjustly depressed,

everywhere trampled upon, or at the best overlooked, by governments; nowhere possessing power enough to extort redress of their most positive grievances, provision for their mental culture, or even to prevent themselves from being taxed avowedly for the pecuniary profit of the ruling classes. To see these things, and to seek to put an end to them, by means (among other things) of giving more political power to the majority, constitutes Radicalism; and it is because so many in this age have felt this wish, and have felt that the realization of it was an object worthy of men's devoting their lives to it, that such a theory of government as Bentham's has found favour with them. But, though to pass from one form of bad government to another be the ordinary fate of mankind, philosophers ought not to make themselves parties to it, by sacrificing one portion of important truth to another.

The numerical majority of any society whatever, must consist of persons all standing in the same social position, and having, in the main, the same pursuits, namely, unskilled manual labourers; and we mean no disparagement to them: whatever we say to their disadvantage, we say equally of a numerical majority of shopkeepers, or of squires. Where there is identity of position and pursuits, there also will be identity of partialities, passions, and prejudices; and to give to any one set of partialities, passions, and prejudices, absolute power, without counter-balance from partialities, passions, and prejudices of a different sort, is the way to render the correction of any of those imperfections hopeless; to make one narrow, mean type of human nature universal and perpetual, and to crush

every influence which tends to the further improvement of man's intellectual and moral nature. There must, we know, be some paramount power in society; and that the majority should be that power, is on the whole right, not as being just in itself, but as being less unjust than any other footing on which the matter can be placed. But it is necessary that the institutions of society should make provision for keeping up, in some form or other, as a corrective to partial views, and a shelter for freedom of thought and individuality of character, a perpetual and standing Opposition to the will of the majority. All countries which have long continued progressive, or been durably great, have been so because there has been an organized opposition to the ruling power, of whatever kind that power was: plebeians to patricians, clergy to kings, freethinkers to clergy, kings to barons, commons to king and aristocracy. Almost all the greatest men who ever lived have formed part of such an Opposition. Wherever some such quarrel has not been going on—wherever it has been terminated by the complete victory of one of the contending principles, and no new contest has taken the place of the old —society has either hardened into Chinese stationariness, or fallen into dissolution. A centre of resistance, round which all the moral and social elements which the ruling power views with disfavour may cluster themselves, and behind whose bulwarks they may find shelter from the attempts of that power to hunt them out of existence, is as necessary where the opinion of the majority is sovereign, as where the ruling power is a hierarchy or an aristocracy. Where no such *point d'appui* exists, there the human race will

inevitably degenerate; and the question, whether the United States, for instance, will in time sink into another China (also a most commercial and industrious nation), resolves itself, to us, into the question, whether such a centre of resistance will gradually evolve itself or not.

These things being considered, we cannot think that Bentham made the most useful employment which might have been made of his great powers, when, not content with enthroning the majority as sovereign, by means of universal suffrage without king or house of lords, he exhausted all the resources of ingenuity in devising means for riveting the yoke of public opinion closer and closer round the necks of all public functionaries, and excluding every possibility of the exercise of the slightest or most temporary influence either by a minority, or by the functionary's own notions of right. Surely when any power has been made the strongest power, enough has been done for it; care is thenceforth wanted rather to prevent that strongest power from swallowing up all others. Wherever all the forces of society act in one single direction, the just claims of the individual human being are in extreme peril. The power of the majority is salutary so far as it is used defensively, not offensively—as its exertion is tempered by respect for the personality of the individual, and deference to superiority of cultivated intelligence. If Bentham had employed himself in pointing out the means by which institutions fundamentally democratic might be best adapted to the preservation and strengthening of those two sentiments, he would have done something more permanently valuable, and more worthy of his

great intellect. Montesquieu, with the lights of the present age, would have done it; and we are possibly destined to receive this benefit from the Montesquieu of our own times, M. de Tocqueville.

Do we then consider Bentham's political speculations useless? Far from it. We consider them only one-sided. He has brought out into a strong light, has cleared from a thousand confusions and misconceptions, and pointed out with admirable skill the best means of promoting, one of the ideal qualities of a perfect government—identity of interest between the trustees and the community for whom they hold their power in trust. This quality is not attainable in its ideal perfection, and must moreover be striven for with a perpetual eye to all other requisites; but those other requisites must still more be striven for without losing sight of this: and when the slightest postponement is made of it to any other end, the sacrifice, often necessary, is never unattended with evil.* Bentham has pointed out how complete this sacrifice is in modern European societies: how exclusively, partial and sinister interests are the ruling power there, with only such check as is imposed by public opinion—which being thus, in the existing order of things, perpetually apparent as a source of good, he was led by natural partiality to exaggerate its intrinsic excellence. This sinister interest of rulers Bentham hunted through all its disguises, and especially through those which hide it from the men themselves who are influenced by it. The greatest service rendered by him to the philosophy of universal human nature, is,

* [For further illustrations of this point, see the Appendix to the present volume.]

perhaps, his illustration of what he terms 'interest-begotten prejudice'—the common tendency of man to make a duty and a virtue of following his self-interest. The idea, it is true, was far from being peculiarly Bentham's: the artifices by which we persuade ourselves that we are not yielding to our selfish inclinations when we are, had attracted the notice of all moralists, and had been probed by religious writers to a depth as much below Bentham's, as their knowledge of the profundities and windings of the human heart was superior to his. But it is selfish interest in the form of class-interest, and the class morality founded thereon, which Bentham has illustrated: the manner in which any set of persons who mix much together, and have a common interest, are apt to make that common interest their standard of virtue, and the social feelings of the members of the class are made to play into the hands of their selfish ones; whence the union so often exemplified in history, between the most heroic personal disinterestedness and the most odious class-selfishness. This was one of Bentham's leading ideas, and almost the only one by which he contributed to the elucidation of history: much of which, except so far as this explained it, must have been entirely inexplicable to him. The idea was given him by Helvetius, whose book, 'De l'Esprit,' is one continued and most acute commentary on it; and, together with the other great idea of Helvetius, the influence of circumstances on character, it will make his name live by the side of Rousseau, when most of the other French metaphysicians of the eighteenth century will be extant as such only in literary history.

In the brief view which we have been able to give of Bentham's philosophy, it may surprise the reader that we have said so little about the first principle of it, with which his name is more identified than with anything else; the 'principle of utility,' or, as he afterwards named it, 'the greatest-happiness principle.' It is a topic on which much were to be said, if there were room, or if it were in reality necessary for the just estimation of Bentham. On an occasion more suitable for a discussion of the metaphysics of morality, or on which the elucidations necessary to make an opinion on so abstract a subject intelligible could be conveniently given, we should be fully prepared to state what we think on this subject. At present we shall only say, that while, under proper explanations, we entirely agree with Bentham in his principle, we do not hold with him that all right thinking on the details of morals depends on its express assertion. We think utility, or happiness, much too complex and indefinite an end to be sought except through the medium of various secondary ends, concerning which there may be, and often is, agreement among persons who differ in their ultimate standard; and about which there does in fact prevail a much greater unanimity among thinking persons, than might be supposed from their diametrical divergence on the great questions of moral metaphysics. As mankind are much more nearly of one nature, than of one opinion about their own nature, they are more easily brought to agree in their intermediate principles, *vera illa et media axiomata*, as Bacon says, than in their first principles: and the attempt to make the bearings of actions upon the ultimate end more evident than they can be made by

referring them to the intermediate ends, and to estimate their value by a direct reference to human happiness, generally terminates in attaching most importance, not to those effects which are really the greatest, but to those which can most easily be pointed to and individually identified. Those who adopt utility as a standard can seldom apply it truly except through the secondary principles; those who reject it, generally do no more than erect those secondary principles into first principles. It is when two or more of the secondary principles conflict, that a direct appeal to some first principle becomes necessary; and then commences the practical importance of the utilitarian controversy; which is in other respects, a question of arrangement and logical subordination rather than of practice; important principally in a purely scientific point of view, for the sake of the systematic unity and coherency of ethical philosophy. It is probable, however, that to the principle of utility we owe all that Bentham did; that it was necessary to him to find a first principle which he could receive as self-evident, and to which he could attach all his other doctrines as logical consequences: that to him systematic unity was an indispensable condition of his confidence in his own intellect. And there is something further to be remarked. Whether happiness be or be not the end to which morality should be referred—that it be referred to an *end* of some sort, and not left in the dominion of vague feeling or inexplicable internal conviction, that it be made a matter of reason and calculation, and not merely of sentiment, is essential to the very idea of moral philosophy; is, in fact, what renders argument or discussion on moral questions possible. That the

morality of actions depends on the consequences which they tend to produce, is the doctrine of rational persons of all schools; that the good or evil of those consequences is measured solely by pleasure or pain, is all of the doctrine of the school of utility, which is peculiar to it.

In so far as Bentham's adoption of the principle of utility induced him to fix his attention upon the consequences of actions as the consideration determining their morality, so far he was indisputably in the right path: though to go far in it without wandering, there was needed a greater knowledge of the formation of character, and of the consequences of actions upon the agent's own frame of mind, than Bentham possessed. His want of power to estimate this class of consequences, together with his want of the degree of modest deference which, from those who have not competent experience of their own, is due to the experience of others on that part of the subject, greatly limit the value of his speculations on questions of practical ethics.

He is chargeable also with another error, which it would be improper to pass over, because nothing has tended more to place him in opposition to the common feelings of mankind, and to give to his philosophy that cold, mechanical, and ungenial air which characterizes the popular idea of a Benthamite. This error, or rather one-sidedness, belongs to him not as a utilitarian, but as a moralist by profession, and in common with almost all professed moralists, whether religious or philosophical: it is that of treating the *moral* view of actions and characters, which is unquestionably the first and most important mode of looking

at them, as if it were the sole one: whereas it is only one of three, by all of which our sentiments towards the human being may be, ought to be, and without entirely crushing our own nature cannot but be, materially influenced. Every human action has three aspects: its *moral* aspect, or that of its *right* and *wrong;* its *æsthetic* aspect, or that of its *beauty;* its *sympathetic* aspect, or that of its *loveableness*. The first addresses itself to our reason and conscience; the second to our imagination; the third to our human fellow-feeling. According to the first, we approve or disapprove; according to the second, we admire or despise; according to the third, we love, pity, or dislike. The morality of an action depends on its foreseeable consequences; its beauty, and its loveableness, or the reverse, depend on the qualities which it is evidence of. Thus, a lie is *wrong*, because its effect is to mislead, and because it tends to destroy the confidence of man in man; it is also *mean*, because it is cowardly —because it proceeds from not daring to face the consequences of telling the truth—or at best is evidence of want of that *power* to compass our ends by straightforward means, which is conceived as properly belonging to every person not deficient in energy or in understanding. The action of Brutus in sentencing his sons was *right*, because it was executing a law essential to the freedom of his country, against persons of whose guilt there was no doubt: it was *admirable*, because it evinced a rare degree of patriotism, courage, and self-control; but there was nothing *loveable* in it; it affords either no presumption in regard to loveable qualities, or a presumption of their deficiency. If one of the sons had engaged in the conspiracy from affec-

tion for the other, his action would have been loveable, though neither moral nor admirable. It is not possible for any sophistry to confound these three modes of viewing an action; but it is very possible to adhere to one of them exclusively, and lose sight of the rest. Sentimentality consists in setting the last two of the three above the first; the error of moralists in general, and of Bentham, is to sink the two latter entirely. This is pre-eminently the case with Bentham: he both wrote and felt as if the moral standard ought not only to be paramount (which it ought), but to be alone; as if it ought to be the sole master of all our actions, and even of all our sentiments; as if either to admire or like, or despise or dislike a person for any action which neither does good nor harm, or which does not do a good or a harm proportioned to the sentiment entertained, were an injustice and a prejudice. He carried this so far, that there were certain phrases which, being expressive of what he considered to be this groundless liking or aversion, he could not bear to hear pronounced in his presence. Among these phrases were those of *good* and *bad taste.* He thought it an insolent piece of dogmatism in one person to praise or condemn another in a matter of taste: as if men's likings and dislikings, on things in themselves indifferent, were not full of the most important inferences as to every point of their character; as if a person's tastes did not show him to be wise or a fool, cultivated or ignorant, gentle or rough, sensitive or callous, generous or sordid, benevolent or selfish, conscientious or depraved.

Connected with the same topic are Bentham's peculiar opinions on poetry. Much more has been

said than there is any foundation for, about his contempt for the pleasures of imagination, and for the fine arts. Music was throughout life his favourite amusement; painting, sculpture, and the other arts addressed to the eye, he was so far from holding in any contempt, that he occasionally recognises them as means employable for important social ends; though his ignorance of the deeper springs of human character prevented him (as it prevents most Englishmen) from suspecting how profoundly such things enter into the moral nature of man, and into the education both of the individual and of the race. But towards poetry in the narrower sense, that which employs the language of words, he entertained no favour. Words, he thought, were perverted from their proper office when they were employed in uttering anything but precise logical truth. He says, somewhere in his works, that, 'quantity of pleasure being equal, push-pin is as good as poetry:' but this is only a paradoxical way of stating what he would equally have said of the things which he most valued and admired. Another aphorism is attributed to him, which is much more characteristic of his view of this subject: 'All poetry is misrepresentation.' Poetry, he thought, consisted essentially in exaggeration for effect: in proclaiming some one view of a thing very emphatically, and suppressing all the limitations and qualifications. This trait of character seems to us a curious example of what Mr. Carlyle strikingly calls 'the completeness of limited men.' Here is a philosopher who is happy within his narrow boundary as no man of indefinite range ever was: who flatters himself that he is so completely emancipated from the

essential law of poor human intellect, by which it can only see one thing at a time well, that he can even turn round upon the imperfection and lay a solemn interdict upon it. Did Bentham really suppose that it is in poetry only that propositions cannot be exactly true, cannot contain in themselves all the limitations and qualifications with which they require to be taken when applied to practice? We have seen how far his own prose propositions are from realizing this Utopia: and even the attempt to approach it would be incompatible not with poetry merely, but with oratory, and popular writing of every kind. Bentham's charge is true to the fullest extent; all writing which undertakes to make men feel truths as well as see them, does take up one point at a time, does seek to impress that, to drive that home, to make it sink into and colour the whole mind of the reader or hearer. It is justified in doing so, if the portion of truth which it thus enforces be that which is called for by the occasion. All writing addressed to the feelings has a natural tendency to exaggeration; but Bentham should have remembered that in this, as in many things, we must aim at too much, to be assured of doing enough.

From the same principle in Bentham came the intricate and involved style, which makes his later writings books for the student only, not the general reader. It was from his perpetually aiming at impracticable precision. Nearly all his earlier, and many parts of his later writings, are models, as we have already observed, of light, playful, and popular style: a Benthamiana might be made of passages worthy of Addison or Goldsmith. But in his later

years and more advanced studies, he fell into a Latin or German structure of sentence, foreign to the genius of the English language. He could not bear, for the sake of clearness and the reader's ease, to say, as ordinary men are content to do, a little more than the truth in one sentence, and correct it in the next. The whole of the qualifying remarks which he intended to make, he insisted upon imbedding as parentheses in the very middle of the sentence itself. And thus the sense being so long suspended, and attention being required to the accessory ideas before the principal idea had been properly seized, it became difficult, without some practice, to make out the train of thought. It is fortunate that so many of the most important parts of his writings are free from this defect. We regard it as a *reductio ad absurdum* of his objection to poetry. In trying to write in a manner against which the same objection should not lie, he could stop nowhere short of utter unreadableness, and after all attained no more accuracy than is compatible with opinions as imperfect and one-sided as those of any poet or sentimentalist breathing. Judge then in what state literature and philosophy would be, and what chance they would have of influencing the multitude, if his objection were allowed, and all styles of writing banished which would not stand his test.

We must here close this brief and imperfect view of Bentham and his doctrines; in which many parts of the subject have been entirely untouched, and no part done justice to, but which at least proceeds from an intimate familiarity with his writings, and is nearly the first attempt at an impartial estimate of his cha-

racter as a philosopher, and of the result of his labours to the world.

After every abatement, and it has been seen whether we have made our abatements sparingly—there remains to Bentham an indisputable place among the great intellectual benefactors of mankind. His writings will long form an indispensable part of the education of the highest order of practical thinkers; and the collected edition of them ought to be in the hands of every one who would either understand his age, or take any beneficial part in the great business of it.*

* Since the first publication of this paper, Lord Brougham's brilliant series of characters has been published, including a sketch of Bentham. Lord Brougham's view of Bentham's characteristics agrees in the main points, so far as it goes, with the result of our more minute examination, but there is an imputation cast upon Bentham, of a jealous and splenetic disposition in private life, of which we feel called upon to give at once a contradiction and an explanation. It is indispensable to a correct estimate of any of Bentham's dealings with the world, to bear in mind that in everything except abstract speculation he was to the last, what we have called him, essentially a boy. He had the freshness, the simplicity, the confidingness, the liveliness and activity, all the delightful qualities of boyhood, and the weaknesses which are the reverse side of those qualities—the undue importance attached to trifles, the habitual mismeasurement of the practical bearing and value of things, the readiness to be either delighted or offended on inadequate cause. These were the real sources of what was unreasonable in some of his attacks on individuals, and in particular on Lord Brougham, on the subject of his Law Reforms; they were no more the effect of envy or malice, or any really unamiable quality, than the freaks of a pettish child, and are scarcely a fitter subject of censure or criticism.

COLERIDGE.*

THE name of Coleridge is one of the few English names of our time which are likely to be oftener pronounced, and to become symbolical of more important things, in proportion as the inward workings of the age manifest themselves more and more in outward facts. Bentham excepted, no Englishman of recent date has left his impress so deeply in the opinions and mental tendencies of those among us who attempt to enlighten their practice by philosophical meditation. If it be true, as Lord Bacon affirms, that a knowledge of the speculative opinions of the men between twenty and thirty years of age is the great source of political prophecy, the existence of Coleridge will show itself by no slight or ambiguous traces in the coming history of our country; for no one has contributed more to shape the opinions of those among its younger men, who can be said to have opinions at all.

The influence of Coleridge, like that of Bentham, extends far beyond those who share in the peculiarities of his religious or philosophical creed. He has been the great awakener in this country of the spirit of philosophy, within the bounds of traditional opinions. He has been, almost as truly as Bentham, 'the great questioner of things established;' for a questioner

* *London and Westminster Review*, March 1840.

needs not necessarily be an enemy. By Bentham, beyond all others, men have been led to ask themselves, in regard to any ancient or received opinion, Is it true? and by Coleridge, What is the meaning of it? The one took his stand *outside* the received opinion, and surveyed it as an entire stranger to it: the other looked at it from within, and endeavoured to see it with the eyes of a believer in it; to discover by what apparent facts it was at first suggested, and by what appearances it has ever since been rendered continually credible—has seemed, to a succession of persons, to be a faithful interpretation of their experience. Bentham judged a proposition true or false as it accorded or not with the result of his own inquiries; and did not search very curiously into what might be meant by the proposition, when it obviously did not mean what he thought true. With Coleridge, on the contrary, the very fact that any doctrine had been believed by thoughtful men, and received by whole nations or generations of mankind, was part of the problem to be solved, was one of the phenomena to be accounted for. And as Bentham's short and easy method of referring all to the selfish interests of aristocracies, or priests, or lawyers, or some other species of impostors, could not satisfy a man who saw so much farther into the complexities of the human intellect and feelings—he considered the long or extensive prevalence of any opinion as a presumption that it was not altogether a fallacy; that, to its first authors at least, it was the result of a struggle to express in words something which had a reality to them, though perhaps not to many of those who have since received the doctrine by mere tradi-

tion. The long duration of a belief, he thought, is at least proof of an adaptation in it to some portion or other of the human mind; and if, on digging down to the root, we do not find, as is generally the case, some truth, we shall find some natural want or requirement of human nature which the doctrine in question is fitted to satisfy: among which wants the instincts of selfishness and of credulity have a place, but by no means an exclusive one. From this difference in the points of view of the two philosophers, and from the too rigid adherence of each to his own, it was to be expected that Bentham should continually miss the truth which is in the traditional opinions, and Coleridge that which is out of them, and at variance with them. But it was also likely that each would find, or show the way to finding, much of what the other missed.

It is hardly possible to speak of Coleridge, and his position among his cotemporaries, without reverting to Bentham: they are connected by two of the closest bonds of association—resemblance, and contrast. It would be difficult to find two persons of philosophic eminence more exactly the contrary of one another. Compare their modes of treatment of any subject, and you might fancy them inhabitants of different worlds. They seem to have scarcely a principle or a premise in common. Each of them sees scarcely anything but what the other does not see. Bentham would have regarded Coleridge with a peculiar measure of the good-humoured contempt with which he was accustomed to regard all modes of philosophizing different from his own. Coleridge would probably have made Bentham one of the exceptions

to the enlarged and liberal appreciation which (to the credit of *his* mode of philosophizing) he extended to most thinkers of any eminence, from whom he differed. But contraries, as logicians say, are but *quæ in eodem genere maxime distant*, the things which are farthest from one another in the same kind. These two agreed in being the men who, in their age and country, did most to enforce, by precept and example, the necessity of a philosophy. They agreed in making it their occupation to recal opinions to first principles; taking no proposition for granted without examining into the grounds of it, and ascertaining that it possessed the kind and degree of evidence suitable to its nature. They agreed in recognising that sound theory is the only foundation for sound practice, and that whoever despises theory, let him give himself what airs of wisdom he may, is self-convicted of being a quack. If a book were to be compiled containing all the best things ever said on the rule-of-thumb school of political craftsmanship, and on the insufficiency for practical purposes of what the mere practical man calls experience, it is difficult to say whether the collection would be more indebted to the writings of Bentham or of Coleridge. They agreed, too, in perceiving that the groundwork of all other philosophy must be laid in the philosophy of the mind. To lay this foundation deeply and strongly, and to raise a superstructure in accordance with it, were the objects to which their lives were devoted. They employed, indeed, for the most part, different materials; but as the materials of both were real observations, the genuine product of experience—the results will in the end be found not hostile, but supplementary, to

one another. Of their methods of philosophizing, the same thing may be said: they were different, yet both were legitimate logical processes. In every respect the two men are each other's 'completing counterpart:' the strong points of each correspond to the weak points of the other. Whoever could master the premises and combine the methods of both, would possess the entire English philosophy of his age. Coleridge used to say that every one is born either a Platonist or an Aristotelian: it may be similarly affirmed, that every Englishman of the present day is by implication either a Benthamite or a Coleridgian; holds views of human affairs which can only be proved true on the principles either of Bentham or of Coleridge. In one respect, indeed, the parallel fails. Bentham so improved and added to the system of philosophy he adopted, that for his successors he may almost be accounted its founder; while Coleridge, though he has left on the system he inculcated, such traces of himself as cannot fail to be left by any mind of original powers, was anticipated in all the essentials of his doctrine by the great Germans of the latter half of the last century, and was accompanied in it by the remarkable series of their French expositors and followers. Hence, although Coleridge is to Englishmen the type and the main source of that doctrine, he is the creator rather of the shape in which it has appeared among us, than of the doctrine itself.

The time is yet far distant when, in the estimation of Coleridge, and of his influence upon the intellect of our time, anything like unanimity can be looked for. As a poet, Coleridge has taken his place. The

healthier taste, and more intelligent canons of poetic criticism, which he was himself mainly instrumental in diffusing, have at length assigned to him his proper rank, as one among the great, and (if we look to the powers shown rather than to the amount of actual achievement) among the greatest, names in our literature. But as a philosopher, the class of thinkers has scarcely yet arisen by whom he is to be judged. The limited philosophical public of this country is as yet too exclusively divided between those to whom Coleridge and the views which he promulgated or defended are everything, and those to whom they are nothing. A true thinker can only be justly estimated when his thoughts have worked their way into minds formed in a different school; have been wrought and moulded into consistency with all other true and relevant thoughts; when the noisy conflict of half-truths, angrily denying one another, has subsided, and ideas which seemed mutually incompatible, have been found only to require mutual limitations. This time has not yet come for Coleridge. The spirit of philosophy in England, like that of religion, is still rootedly sectarian. Conservative thinkers and Liberals, transcendentalists and admirers of Hobbes and Locke, regard each other as out of the pale of philosophical intercourse; look upon each other's speculations as vitiated by an original taint, which makes all study of them, except for purposes of attack, useless, if not mischievous. An error much the same as if Kepler had refused to profit by Ptolemy's or Tycho's observations, because those astronomers believed that the sun moved round the earth; or as if Priestley and Lavoisier, because they differed on the doctrine of

phlogiston, had rejected each other's chemical experiments. It is even a still greater error than either of these. For, among the truths long recognised by Continental philosophers, but which very few Englishmen have yet arrived at, one is, the importance, in the present imperfect state of mental and social science, of antagonist modes of thought: which, it will one day be felt, are as necessary to one another in speculation, as mutually checking powers are in a political constitution. A clear insight, indeed, into this necessity is the only rational or enduring basis of philosophical tolerance; the only condition under which liberality in matters of opinion can be anything better than a polite synonym for indifference between one opinion and another.

All students of man and society who possess that first requisite for so difficult a study, a due sense of its difficulties, are aware that the besetting danger is not so much of embracing falsehood for truth, as of mistaking part of the truth for the whole. It might be plausibly maintained that in almost every one of the leading controversies, past or present, in social philosophy, both sides were in the right in what they affirmed, though wrong in what they denied; and that if either could have been made to take the other's views in addition to its own, little more would have been needed to make its doctrine correct. Take for instance the question how far mankind have gained by civilization. One observer is forcibly struck by the multiplication of physical comforts; the advancement and diffusion of knowledge; the decay of superstition; the facilities of mutual intercourse; the softening of manners; the decline of war

and personal conflict; the progressive limitation of the tyranny of the strong over the weak; the great works accomplished throughout the globe by the co-operation of multitudes: and he becomes that very common character, the worshipper of 'our enlightened age.' Another fixes his attention, not upon the value of these advantages, but upon the high price which is paid for them; the relaxation of individual energy and courage; the loss of proud and self-relying independence; the slavery of so large a portion of mankind to artificial wants; their effeminate shrinking from even the shadow of pain; the dull unexciting monotony of their lives, and the passionless insipidity, and absence of any marked individuality, in their characters; the contrast between the narrow mechanical understanding, produced by a life spent in executing by fixed rules a fixed task, and the varied powers of the man of the woods, whose subsistence and safety depend at each instant upon his capacity of extemporarily adapting means to ends; the demoralizing effect of great inequalities in wealth and social rank; and the sufferings of the great mass of the people of civilized countries, whose wants are scarcely better provided for than those of the savage, while they are bound by a thousand fetters in lieu of the freedom and excitement which are his compensations. One who attends to these things, and to these exclusively, will be apt to infer that savage life is preferable to civilized; that the work of civilization should as far as possible be undone; and from the premises of Rousseau, he will not improbably be led to the practical conclusions of Rousseau's disciple, Robespierre. No two thinkers can be more entirely at variance than the two we

have supposed—the worshippers of Civilization and of Independence, of the present and of the remote past. Yet all that is positive in the opinions of either of them is true; and we see how easy it would be to choose one's path, if either half of the truth were the whole of it, and how great may be the difficulty of framing, as it is necessary to do, a set of practical maxims which combine both.

So again, one person sees in a very strong light the need which the great mass of mankind have of being ruled over by a degree of intelligence and virtue superior to their own. He is deeply impressed with the mischief done to the uneducated and uncultivated by weaning them of all habits of reverence, appealing to them as a competent tribunal to decide the most intricate questions, and making them think themselves capable, not only of being a light to themselves, but of giving the law to their superiors in culture. He sees, further, that cultivation, to be carried beyond a certain point, requires leisure; that leisure is the natural attribute of a hereditary aristocracy; that such a body has all the means of acquiring intellectual and moral superiority; and he needs be at no loss to endow them with abundant motives to it. An aristocracy indeed, being human, are, as he cannot but see, not exempt, any more than their inferiors, from the common need of being controlled and enlightened by a still greater wisdom and goodness than their own. For this, however, his reliance is upon reverence for a Higher above them, sedulously inculcated and fostered by the course of their education. We thus see brought together all the elements of a conscientious zealot for an aristocratic government, supporting

and supported by an established Christian church. There is truth, and important truth, in this thinker's premises. But there is a thinker of a very different description, in whose premises there is an equal portion of truth. This is he who says, that an average man, even an average member of an aristocracy, if he can postpone the interests of other people to his own calculations or instincts of self-interest, will do so; that all governments in all ages have done so, as far as they were permitted, and generally to a ruinous extent; and that the only possible remedy is a pure democracy, in which the people are their own governors, and can have no selfish interest in oppressing themselves.

Thus it is in regard to every important partial truth; there are always two conflicting modes of thought, one tending to give to that truth too large, the other to give it too small, a place: and the history of opinion is generally an oscillation between these extremes. From the imperfection of the human faculties, it seldom happens that, even in the minds of eminent thinkers, each partial view of their subject passes for its worth, and none for more than its worth. But even if this just balance exist in the mind of the wiser teacher, it will not exist in his disciples, less in the general mind. He cannot prevent that which is new in his doctrine, and on which, being new, he is forced to insist the most strongly, from making a disproportionate impression. The impetus necessary to overcome the obstacles which resist all novelties of opinion, seldom fails to carry the public mind almost as far on the contrary side of the perpendicular. Thus every excess in either direction de-

termines a corresponding reaction; improvement consisting only in this, that the oscillation, each time, departs rather less widely from the centre, and an ever-increasing tendency is manifested to settle finally in it.

Now, the Germano-Coleridgian doctrine is, in our view of the matter, the result of such a reaction. It expresses the revolt of the human mind against the philosophy of the eighteenth century. It is ontological, because that was experimental; conservative, because that was innovative; religious, because so much of that was infidel; concrete and historical, because that was abstract and metaphysical; poetical, because that was matter-of-fact and prosaic. In every respect it flies off in the contrary direction to its predecessor; yet faithful to the general law of improvement last noticed, it is less extreme in its opposition, it denies less of what is true in the doctrine it wars against, than had been the case in any previous philosophic reaction; and in particular, far less than when the philosophy of the eighteenth century triumphed, and so memorably abused its victory, over that which preceded it.

We may begin our consideration of the two systems either at one extreme or the other; with their highest philosophical generalizations, or with their practical conclusions. The former seems preferable, because it is in their highest generalities that the difference between the two systems is most familiarly known.

Every consistent scheme of philosophy requires as its starting-point, a theory respecting the sources of human knowledge, and the objects which the human

faculties are capable of taking cognizance of. The prevailing theory in the eighteenth century, on this most comprehensive of questions, was that proclaimed by Locke, and commonly attributed to Aristotle—that all knowledge consists of generalizations from experience. Of nature, or anything whatever external to ourselves, we know, according to this theory, nothing, except the facts which present themselves to our senses, and such other facts as may, by analogy, be inferred from these. There is no knowledge *à priori;* no truths cognizable by the mind's inward light, and grounded on intuitive evidence. Sensation, and the mind's consciousness of its own acts, are not only the exclusive sources, but the sole materials of our knowledge. From this doctrine, Coleridge, with the German philosophers since Kant (not to go farther back) and most of the English since Reid, strongly dissents. He claims for the human mind a capacity, within certain limits, of perceiving the nature and properties of 'Things in themselves.' He distinguishes in the human intellect two faculties, which, in the technical language common to him with the Germans, he calls Understanding and Reason. The former faculty judges of phenomena, or the appearances of things, and forms generalizations from these: to the latter it belongs, by direct intuition, to perceive things, and recognise truths, not cognizable by our senses. These perceptions are not indeed innate, nor could ever have been awakened in us without experience; but they are not copies of it: experience is not their prototype, it is only the occasion by which they are irresistibly suggested. The appearances in nature excite in us, by an inherent law,

ideas of those invisible things which are the causes of the visible appearances, and on whose laws those appearances depend: and we then perceive that these things must have pre-existed to render the appearances possible; just as (to use a frequent illustration of Coleridge's) we see, before we know that we have eyes; but when once this is known to us, we perceive that eyes must have pre-existed to enable us to see. Among the truths which are thus known *à priori*, by occasion of experience, but not themselves the subjects of experience, Coleridge includes the fundamental doctrines of religion and morals, the principles of mathematics, and the ultimate laws even of physical nature; which he contends cannot be proved by experience, though they must necessarily be consistent with it, and would, if we knew them perfectly, enable us to account for all observed facts, and to predict all those which are as yet unobserved.

It is not necessary to remind any one who concerns himself with such subjects, that between the partisans of these two opposite doctrines there reigns a *bellum internecinum*. Neither side is sparing in the imputation of intellectual and moral obliquity to the perceptions, and of pernicious consequences to the creed, of its antagonists. Sensualism is the common term of abuse for the one philosophy, mysticism for the other. The one doctrine is accused of making men beasts, the other lunatics. It is the unaffected belief of numbers on one side of the controversy, that their adversaries are actuated by a desire to break loose from moral and religious obligation; and of numbers on the other that their opponents are either men fit for Bedlam, or who cunningly pander to the interests

of hierarchies and aristocracies, by manufacturing superfine new arguments in favour of old prejudices. It is almost needless to say that those who are freest with these mutual accusations, are seldom those who are most at home in the real intricacies of the question, or who are best acquainted with the argumentative strength of the opposite side, or even of their own. But without going to these extreme lengths, even sober men on both sides take no charitable view of the tendencies of each other's opinions.

It is affirmed that the doctrine of Locke and his followers, that all knowledge is experience generalized, leads by strict logical consequence to atheism: that Hume and other sceptics were right when they contended that it is impossible to prove a God on grounds of experience; and Coleridge (like Kant) maintains positively, that the ordinary argument for a Deity, from marks of design in the universe, or, in other words, from the resemblance of the order in nature to the effects of human skill and contrivance, is not tenable. It is further said that the same doctrine annihilates moral obligation; reducing morality either to the blind impulses of animal sensibility, or to a calculation of prudential consequences, both equally fatal to its essence. Even science, it is affirmed, loses the character of science in this view of it, and becomes empiricism; a mere enumeration and arrangement of facts, not explaining nor accounting for them: since a fact is only then accounted for, when we are made to see in it the manifestation of laws, which, as soon as they are perceived at all, are perceived to be *necessary*. These are the charges brought by the transcendental philosophers against the school

of Locke, Hartley, and Bentham. They in their turn allege that the transcendentalists make imagination, and not observation, the criterion of truth; that they lay down principles under which a man may enthrone his wildest dreams in the chair of philosophy, and impose them on mankind as intuitions of the pure reason: which has, in fact, been done in all ages, by all manner of mystical enthusiasts. And even if, with gross inconsistency, the private revelations of any individual Behmen or Swedenborg be disowned, or, in other words, outvoted (the only means of discrimination which, it is contended, the theory admits of), this is still only substituting, as the test of truth, the dreams of the majority for the dreams of each individual. Whoever form a strong enough party, may at any time set up the immediate perceptions of *their* reason, that is to say, any reigning prejudice, as a truth independent of experience; a truth not only requiring no proof, but to be believed in opposition to all that appears proof to the mere understanding; nay, the more to be believed, because it cannot be put into words and into the logical form of a proposition without a contradiction in terms: for no less authority than this is claimed by some transcendentalists for their *à priori* truths. And thus a ready mode is provided, by which whoever is on the strongest side may dogmatize at his ease, and instead of proving his propositions, may rail at all who deny them, as bereft of 'the vision and the faculty divine,' or blinded to its plainest revelations by a corrupt heart.

This is a very temperate statement of what is charged by these two classes of thinkers against each other. How much of either representation is correct,

cannot conveniently be discussed in this place. In truth, a system of consequences from an opinion, drawn by an adversary, is seldom of much worth. Disputants are rarely sufficiently masters of each other's doctrines, to be good judges what is fairly deducible from them, or how a consequence which seems to flow from one part of the theory may or may not be defeated by another part. To combine the different parts of a doctrine with one another, and with all admitted truths, is not indeed a small trouble, nor one which a person is often inclined to take for other people's opinions. Enough if each does it for his own, which he has a greater interest in, and is more disposed to be just to. Were we to search among men's recorded thoughts for the choicest manifestations of human imbecility and prejudice, our specimens would be mostly taken from their opinions of the opinions of one another. Imputations of horrid consequences ought not to bias the judgment of any person capable of independent thought. Coleridge himself says (in the 25th Aphorism of his 'Aids to Reflection'), 'He who begins by loving Christianity better than truth, will proceed by loving his own sect or church better than Christianity, and end in loving himself better than all.'

As to the fundamental difference of opinion respecting the sources of our knowledge (apart from the corollaries which either party may have drawn from its own principle, or imputed to its opponent's), the question lies far too deep in the recesses of psychology for us to discuss it here. The lists having been open ever since the dawn of philosophy, it is not wonderful that the two parties should have been

forced to put on their strongest armour, both of attack and of defence. The question would not so long have remained a question, if the more obvious arguments on either side had been unanswerable. Each party has been able to urge in its own favour numerous and striking facts, to reconcile which with the opposite theory has required all the metaphysical resources which that theory could command. It will not be wondered at, then, that we here content ourselves with a bare statement of our opinion. It is, that the truth, on this much-debated question, lies with the school of Locke and of Bentham. The nature and laws of Things in themselves, or of the hidden causes of the phenomena which are the objects of experience, appear to us radically inaccessible to the human faculties. We see no ground for believing that anything can be the object of our knowledge except our experience, and what can be inferred from our experience by the analogies of experience itself; nor that there is any idea, feeling, or power in the human mind, which, in order to account for it, requires that its origin should be referred to any other source. We are therefore at issue with Coleridge on the central idea of his philosophy; and we find no need of, and no use for, the peculiar technical terminology which he and his masters the Germans have introduced into philosophy, for the double purpose of giving logical precision to doctrines which we do not admit, and of marking a relation between those abstract doctrines and many concrete experimental truths, which this language, in our judgment, serves not to elucidate, but to disguise and obscure. Indeed, but for these peculiarities of language, it would

be difficult to understand how the reproach of mysticism (by which nothing is meant in common parlance but unintelligibleness) has been fixed upon Coleridge and the Germans in the minds of many, to whom doctrines substantially the same, when taught in a manner more superficial and less fenced round against objections, by Reid and Dugald Stewart, have appeared the plain dictates of 'common sense,' successfully asserted against the subtleties of metaphysics.

Yet, though we think the doctrines of Coleridge and the Germans, in the pure science of mind, erroneous, and have no taste for their peculiar terminology, we are far from thinking that even in respect of this, the least valuable part of their intellectual exertions, those philosophers have lived in vain. The doctrines of the school of Locke stood in need of an entire renovation: to borrow a physiological illustration from Coleridge, they required, like certain secretions of the human body, to be reabsorbed into the system and secreted afresh. In what form did that philosophy generally prevail throughout Europe? In that of the shallowest set of doctrines which perhaps were ever passed off upon a cultivated age as a complete psychological system—the ideology of Condillac and his school; a system which affected to resolve all the phenomena of the human mind into sensation, by a process which essentially consisted in merely *calling* all states of mind, however heterogeneous, by that name; a philosophy now acknowledged to consist solely of a set of verbal generalizations, explaining nothing, distinguishing nothing, leading to nothing. That men should begin by

sweeping this away, was the first sign that the age of real psychology was about to commence. In England the case, though different, was scarcely better. The philosophy of Locke, as a popular doctrine, had remained nearly as it stood in his own book; which, as its title implies, did not pretend to give an account of any but the intellectual part of our nature; which, even within that limited sphere, was but the commencement of a system, and though its errors and defects as such have been exaggerated beyond all just bounds, it did expose many vulnerable points to the searching criticism of the new school. The least imperfect part of it, the purely logical part, had almost dropped out of sight. With respect to those of Locke's doctrines which are properly metaphysical; however the sceptical part of them may have been followed up by others, and carried beyond the point at which he stopped; the only one of his successors who attempted, and achieved, any considerable improvement and extension of the analytical part, and thereby added anything to the explanation of the human mind on Locke's principles, was Hartley. But Hartley's doctrines, so far as they are true, were so much in advance of the age, and the way had been so little prepared for them by the general tone of thinking which yet prevailed, even under the influence of Locke's writings, that the philosophic world did not deem them worthy of being attended to. Reid and Stewart were allowed to run them down uncontradicted: Brown, though a man of a kindred genius, had evidently never read them; and but for the accident of their being taken up by Priestley, who transmitted them as a kind of heirloom to his Unita-

rian followers, the name of Hartley might have perished, or survived only as that of a visionary physician, the author of an exploded physiological hypothesis. It perhaps required all the violence of the assaults made by Reid and the German school upon Locke's system, to recall men's minds to Hartley's principles, as alone adequate to the solution, upon that system, of the peculiar difficulties which those assailants pressed upon men's attention as altogether insoluble by it. We may here notice that Coleridge, before he adopted his later philosophical views, was an enthusiastic Hartleian; so that his abandonment of the philosophy of Locke cannot be imputed to unacquaintance with the highest form of that philosophy which had yet appeared. That he should pass through that highest form without stopping at it, is itself a strong presumption that there were more difficulties in the question than Hartley had solved. That anything has since been done to solve them we probably owe to the revolution in opinion, of which Coleridge was one of the organs; and even in abstract metaphysics, his writings, and those of his school of thinkers, are the richest mine from whence the opposite school can draw the materials for what has yet to be done to perfect their own theory.

If we now pass from the purely abstract to the concrete and practical doctrines of the two schools, we shall see still more clearly the necessity of the reaction, and the great service rendered to philosophy by its authors. This will be best manifested by a survey of the state of practical philosophy in Europe, as Coleridge and his compeers found it, towards the close of the last century.

The state of opinion in the latter half of the eighteenth century was by no means the same on the Continent of Europe and in our own island; and the difference was still greater in appearance than it was in reality. In the more advanced nations of the Continent, the prevailing philosophy had done its work completely: it had spread itself over every department of human knowledge; it had taken possession of the whole Continental mind: and scarcely one educated person was left who retained any allegiance to the opinions or the institutions of ancient times. In England, the native country of compromise, things had stopped far short of this; the philosophical movement had been brought to a halt in an early stage, and a peace had been patched up by concessions on both sides, between the philosophy of the time and its traditional institutions and creeds. Hence the aberrations of the age were generally, on the Continent, at that period, the extravagances of new opinions; in England, the corruptions of old ones.

To insist upon the deficiencies of the Continental philosophy of the last century, or, as it is commonly termed, the French philosophy, is almost superfluous. That philosophy is indeed as unpopular in this country as its bitterest enemy could desire. If its faults were as well understood as they are much railed at, criticism might be considered to have finished its work. But that this is not yet the case, the nature of the imputations currently made upon the French philosophers, sufficiently proves; many of these being as inconsistent with a just philosophic comprehension of their system of opinions, as with charity towards the men themselves. It is not true, for example, that any of them

denied moral obligation, or sought to weaken its force. So far were they from meriting this accusation, that they could not even tolerate the writers who, like Helvetius, ascribed a selfish origin to the feelings of morality, resolving them into a sense of interest. Those writers were as much cried down among the *philosophes* themselves, and what was true and good in them (and there is much that is so) met with as little appreciation, then as now. The error of the philosophers was rather that they trusted too much to those feelings; believed them to be more deeply rooted in human nature than they are; to be not so dependent, as in fact they are, upon collateral influences. They thought them the natural and spontaneous growth of the human heart; so firmly fixed in it, that they would subsist unimpaired, nay invigorated, when the whole system of opinions and observances with which they were habitually intertwined was violently torn away.

To tear away was, indeed, all that these philosophers, for the most part, aimed at: they had no conception that anything else was needful. At their millennium, superstition, priestcraft, error and prejudice of every kind, were to be annihilated; some of them gradually added that despotism and hereditary privileges must share the same fate; and, this accomplished, they never for a moment suspected that all the virtues and graces of humanity could fail to flourish, or that when the noxious weeds were once rooted out, the soil would stand in any need of tillage.

In this they committed the very common error, of mistaking the state of things with which they had

always been familiar, for the universal and natural condition of mankind. They were accustomed to see the human race agglomerated in large nations, all (except here and there a madman or a malefactor) yielding obedience more or less strict to a set of laws prescribed by a few of their own number, and to a set of moral rules prescribed by each other's opinion; renouncing the exercise of individual will and judgment, except within the limits imposed by these laws and rules; and acquiescing in the sacrifice of their individual wishes when the point was decided against them by lawful authority; or persevering only in hopes of altering the opinion of the ruling powers. Finding matters to be so generally in this condition, the philosophers apparently concluded that they could not possibly be in any other; and were ignorant, by what a host of civilizing and restraining influences a state of things so repugnant to man's self-will and love of independence has been brought about, and how imperatively it demands the continuance of those influences as the condition of its own existence. The very first element of the social union, obedience to a government of some sort, has not been found so easy a thing to establish in the world. Among a timid and spiritless race, like the inhabitants of the vast plains of tropical countries, passive obedience may be of natural growth; though even there we doubt whether it has ever been found among any people with whom fatalism, or in other words, submission to the pressure of circumstances as the decree of God, did not prevail as a religious doctrine. But the difficulty of inducing a brave and warlike race to submit their individual *arbitrium* to any common umpire, has always been

felt to be so great, that nothing short of supernatural power has been deemed adequate to overcome it; and such tribes have always assigned to the first institution of civil society a divine origin. So differently did those judge who knew savage man by actual experience, from those who had no acquaintance with him except in the civilized state. In modern Europe itself, after the fall of the Roman empire, to subdue the feudal anarchy and bring the whole people of any European nation into subjection to government (although Christianity in the most concentrated form of its influence was co-operating in the work) required thrice as many centuries as have elapsed since that time.

Now if these philosophers had known human nature under any other type than that of their own age, and of the particular classes of society among whom they lived, it would have occurred to them, that wherever this habitual submission to law and government has been firmly and durably established, and yet the vigour and manliness of character which resisted its establishment have been in any degree preserved, certain requisites have existed, certain conditions have been fulfilled, of which the following may be regarded as the principal.

First: There has existed, for all who were accounted citizens,—for all who were not slaves, kept down by brute force,—a system of *education*, beginning with infancy and continued through life, of which, whatever else it might include, one main and incessant ingredient was *restraining discipline*. To train the human being in the habit, and thence the power, of subordinating his personal impulses and

aims, to what were considered the ends of society; of adhering, against all temptation, to the course of conduct which those ends prescribed; of controlling in himself all the feelings which were liable to militate against those ends, and encouraging all such as tended towards them; this was the purpose, to which every outward motive that the authority directing the system could command, and every inward power or principle which its knowledge of human nature enabled it to evoke, were endeavoured to be rendered instrumental. The entire civil and military policy of the ancient commonwealths was such a system of training: in modern nations its place has been attempted to be supplied principally by religious teaching. And whenever and in proportion as the strictness of the restraining discipline was relaxed, the natural tendency of mankind to anarchy reasserted itself; the State became disorganized from within; mutual conflict for selfish ends, neutralized the energies which were required to keep up the contest against natural causes of evil; and the nation, after a longer or briefer interval of progressive decline, became either the slave of a despotism, or the prey of a foreign invader.

The second condition of permanent political society has been found to be, the existence, in some form or other, of the feeling of allegiance, or loyalty. This feeling may vary in its objects, and is not confined to any particular form of government; but whether in a democracy or in a monarchy, its essence is always the same; viz. that there be in the constitution of the State *something* which is settled, something permanent, and not to be called in question; something which, by general agreement, has a right to be where it is,

and to be secure against disturbance, whatever else may change. This feeling may attach itself, as among the Jews (and indeed in most of the commonwealths of antiquity), to a common God or gods, the protectors and guardians of their State. Or it may attach itself to certain persons, who are deemed to be, whether by divine appointment, by long prescription, or by the general recognition of their superior capacity and worthiness, the rightful guides and guardians of the rest. Or it may attach itself to laws; to ancient liberties, or ordinances. Or finally (and this is the only shape in which the feeling is likely to exist hereafter) it may attach itself to the principles of individual freedom and political and social equality, as realized in institutions which as yet exist nowhere, or exist only in a rudimentary state. But in all political societies which have had a durable existence, there has been some fixed point; something which men agreed in holding sacred; which, wherever freedom of discussion was a recognised principle, it was of course lawful to contest in theory, but which no one could either fear or hope to see shaken in practice; which, in short (except perhaps during some temporary crisis), was in the common estimation placed beyond discussion. And the necessity of this may easily be made evident. A State never is, nor, until mankind are vastly improved, can hope to be, for any long time exempt from internal dissension; for there neither is, nor has ever been, any state of society in which collisions did not occur between the immediate interests and passions of powerful sections of the people. What, then, enables society to weather these storms, and pass through turbulent times without any

permanent weakening of the securities for peaceable existence? Precisely this—that however important the interests about which men fall out, the conflict did not affect the fundamental principles of the system of social union which happened to exist; nor threaten large portions of the community with the subversion of that on which they had built their calculations, and with which their hopes and aims had become identified. But when the questioning of these fundamental principles is (not the occasional disease, or salutary medicine, but) the habitual condition of the body politic, and when all the violent animosities are called forth, which spring naturally from such a situation, the State is virtually in a position of civil war; and can never long remain free from it in act and fact.

The third essential condition of stability in political society, is a strong and active principle of cohesion among the members of the same community or state. We need scarcely say that we do not mean nationality, in the vulgar sense of the term; a senseless antipathy to foreigners; an indifference to the general welfare of the human race, or an unjust preference of the supposed interests of our own country; a cherishing of bad peculiarities because they are national; or a refusal to adopt what has been found good by other countries. We mean a principle of sympathy, not of hostility; of union, not of separation. We mean a feeling of common interest among those who live under the same government, and are contained within the same natural or historical boundaries. We mean, that one part of the community do not consider themselves as foreigners with regard to another part; that

they set a value on their connexion; feel that they are one people, that their lot is cast together, that evil to any of their fellow-countrymen is evil to themselves; and do not desire selfishly to free themselves from their share of any common inconvenience by severing the connexion. How strong this feeling was in those ancient commonwealths which attained any durable greatness, every one knows. How happily Rome, in spite of all her tyranny, succeeded in establishing the feeling of a common country among the provinces of her vast and divided empire, will appear when any one who has given due attention to the subject shall take the trouble to point it out.* In modern times the countries which have had that feeling in the

* We are glad to quote a striking passage from Coleridge on this very subject. He is speaking of the misdeeds of England in Ireland; towards which misdeeds this Tory, as he is called (for the Tories, who neglected him in his lifetime, show no little eagerness to give themselves the credit of his name after his death), entertained feelings scarcely surpassed by those which are excited by the masterly exposure for which we have recently been indebted to M. de Beaumont.

'Let us discharge,' he says, 'what may well be deemed a debt of justice from every well-educated Englishman to his Roman Catholic fellow-subjects of the Sister Island. At least, let us ourselves understand the true cause of the evil as it now exists. To what and to whom is the present state of Ireland mainly to be attributed? This should be the question: and to this I answer aloud, that it is mainly attributable to those who, during a period of little less than a whole century, used as a substitute what Providence had given into their hand as an opportunity; who chose to consider as superseding the most sacred duty, a code of law, which could be excused only on the plea that it enabled them to perform it. To the sloth and improvidence, the weakness and wickedness, of the gentry, clergy, and governors of Ireland, who persevered in preferring intrigue, violence, and selfish expatriation to a system of preventive and remedial measures, the efficacy of which had been warranted for them alike by the whole provincial history of ancient Rome, *cui pacare subactos summa erat sapientia*, and by the happy results of the few exceptions to the contrary scheme unhappily pursued by their and our ancestors.

'I can imagine no work of genius that would more appropriately decorate

strongest degree have been the most powerful countries; England, France, and, in proportion to their territory and resources, Holland and Switzerland; while England in her connexion with Ireland, is one of the most signal examples of the consequences of its absence. Every Italian knows why Italy is under a foreign yoke; every German knows what maintains despotism in the Austrian empire; the evils of Spain flow as much from the absence of nationality among the Spaniards themselves, as from the presence of it in their relations with foreigners; while the completest illustration of all is afforded by the republics of South America, where the parts of one and the same state adhere so slightly together, that no sooner does any province think itself aggrieved by the general government, than it proclaims itself a separate nation.

the dome or wall of a Senate-house, than an abstract of Irish history from the landing of Strongbow to the battle of the Boyne, or to a yet later period, embodied in intelligible emblems—an allegorical history-piece designed in the spirit of a Rubensor a Buonarotti, and with the wild lights, portentous shades, and saturated colours of a Rembrandt, Caravaggio, and Spagnoletti. To complete the great moral and political lesson by the historic contrast, nothing more would be required than by some equally effective means to possess the mind of the spectator with the state and condition of ancient Spain, at less than half a century from the final conclusion of an obstinate and almost unremitting conflict of two hundred years by Agrippa's subjugation of the Cantabrians, *omnibus Hispaniæ populis devictis et pacatis.* At the breaking up of the Empire the West Goths conquered the country, and made division of the lands. Then came eight centuries of Moorish domination. Yet so deeply had Roman wisdom impressed the fairest characters of the Roman mind, that at this very hour, if we except a comparatively insignificant portion of Arabic derivatives, the natives throughout the whole Peninsula speak a language less differing from the *Romana rustica*, or provincial Latin of the times of Lucan and Seneca, than any two of its dialects from each other. The time approaches, I trust, when our political economists may study the science of the provincial policy of the ancients in detail, under the auspices of hope, for immediate and practical purposes.'—*Church and State*, p. 161.

These essential requisites of civil society the French philosophers of the eighteenth century unfortunately overlooked. They found, indeed, all three—at least the first and second, and most of what nourishes and invigorates the third—already undermined by the vices of the institutions, and of the men, that were set up as the guardians and bulwarks of them. If innovators, in their theories, disregarded the elementary principles of the social union, Conservatives, in their practice, had set the first example. The existing order of things had ceased to realize those first principles: from the force of circumstances, and from the short-sighted selfishness of its administrators, it had ceased to possess the essential conditions of permanent society, and was therefore tottering to its fall. But the philosophers did not see this. Bad as the existing system was in the days of its decrepitude, according to them it was still worse when it actually did what it now only pretended to do. Instead of feeling that the effect of a bad social order in sapping the necessary foundations of society itself, is one of the worst of its many mischiefs, the philosophers saw only, and saw with joy, that it was sapping its own foundations. In the weakening of all government they saw only the weakening of bad government; and thought they could not better employ themselves than in finishing the task so well begun—in discrediting all that still remained of restraining discipline, because it rested on the ancient and decayed creeds against which they made war; in unsettling everything which was still considered settled, making men doubtful of the few things of which they still felt certain; and in uprooting what

little remained in the people's minds of reverence for anything above them, of respect to any of the limits which custom and prescription had set to the indulgence of each man's fancies or inclinations, or of attachment to any of the things which belonged to them as a nation, and which made them feel their unity as such.

Much of all this was, no doubt, unavoidable, and not justly matter of blame. When the vices of all constituted authorities, added to natural causes of decay, have eaten the heart out of old institutions and beliefs, while at the same time the growth of knowledge, and the altered circumstances of the age, would have required institutions and creeds different from these even if they had remained uncorrupt, we are far from saying that any degree of wisdom on the part of speculative thinkers could avert the political catastrophes, and the subsequent moral anarchy and unsettledness, which we have witnessed and are witnessing. Still less do we pretend that those principles and influences which we have spoken of as the conditions of the permanent existence of the social union, once lost, can ever be, or should be attempted to be, revived in connexion with the same institutions or the same doctrines as before. When society requires to be rebuilt, there is no use in attempting to rebuild it on the old plan. By the union of the enlarged views and analytic powers of speculative men with the observation and contriving sagacity of men of practice, better institutions and better doctrines must be elaborated; and until this is done we cannot hope for much improvement in our present condition. The effort to do it in the eighteenth century would

have been premature, as the attempts of the Economistes (who, of all persons then living, came nearest to it, and who were the first to form clearly the idea of a Social Science), sufficiently testify. The time was not ripe for doing effectually any other work than that of destruction. But the work of the day should have been so performed as not to impede that of the morrow. No one can calculate what struggles, which the cause of improvement has yet to undergo, might have been spared if the philosophers of the eighteenth century had done anything like justice to the Past. Their mistake was, that they did not acknowledge the historical value of much which had ceased to be useful, nor saw that institutions and creeds, now effete, had rendered essential services to civilization, and still filled a place in the human mind, and in the arrangements of society, which could not without great peril be left vacant. Their mistake was, that they did not recognise in many of the errors which they assailed, corruptions of important truths, and in many of the institutions most cankered with abuse, necessary elements of civilized society, though in a form and vesture no longer suited to the age; and hence they involved, as far as in them lay, many great truths in a common discredit with the errors which had grown up around them. They threw away the shell without preserving the kernel; and attempting to new-model society without the binding forces which hold society together, met with such success as might have been anticipated.

Now we claim, in behalf of the philosophers of the reactionary school—of the school to which Coleridge belongs—that exactly what we blame the philoso-

phers of the eighteenth century for not doing, they have done.

Every reaction in opinion, of course brings into view that portion of the truth which was overlooked before. It was natural that a philosophy which anathematized all that had been going on in Europe from Constantine to Luther, or even to Voltaire, should be succeeded by another, at once a severe critic of the new tendencies of society, and an impassioned vindicator of what was good in the past. This is the easy merit of all Tory and Royalist writers. But the peculiarity of the Germano-Coleridgian school is, that they saw beyond the immediate controversy, to the fundamental principles involved in all such controversies. They were the first (except a solitary thinker here and there) who inquired with any comprehensiveness or depth, into the inductive laws of the existence and growth of human society. They were the first to bring prominently forward the three requisites which we have enumerated, as essential principles of all permanent forms of social existence; as principles, we say, and not as mere accidental advantages inherent in the particular polity or religion which the writer happened to patronize. They were the first who pursued, philosophically and in the spirit of Baconian investigation, not only this inquiry, but others ulterior and collateral to it. They thus produced, not a piece of party advocacy, but a philosophy of society, in the only form in which it is yet possible, that of a philosophy of history; not a defence of particular ethical or religious doctrines, but a contribution, the largest made by any class of thinkers, towards the philosophy of human culture.

The brilliant light which has been thrown upon history during the last half century, has proceeded almost wholly from this school. The disrespect in which history was held by the *philosophes* is notorious; one of the soberest of them, D'Alembert we believe, was the author of the wish that all record whatever of past events could be blotted out. And indeed the ordinary mode of writing history, and the ordinary mode of drawing lessons from it, were almost sufficient to excuse this contempt. But the *philosophes* saw, as usual, what was not true, not what was. It is no wonder that they who looked on the greater part of what had been handed down from the past, as sheer hindrances to man's attaining a well-being which would otherwise be of easy attainment, should content themselves with a very superficial study of history. But the case was otherwise with those who regarded the maintenance of society at all, and especially its maintenance in a state of progressive advancement, as a very difficult task actually achieved, in however imperfect a manner, for a number of centuries, against the strongest obstacles. It was natural that they should feel a deep interest in ascertaining how this had been effected; and should be led to inquire, both what were the requisites of the permanent existence of the body politic, and what were the conditions which had rendered the preservation of these permanent requisites compatible with perpetual and progressive improvement. And hence that series of great writers and thinkers, from Herder to Michelet, by whom history, which was till then 'a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing,' has been made a science of causes and effects; who,

by making the facts and events of the past have a meaning and an intelligible place in the gradual evolution of humanity, have at once given history, even to the imagination, an interest like romance, and afforded the only means of predicting and guiding the future, by unfolding the agencies which have produced and still maintain the Present.*

The same causes have naturally led the same class of thinkers to do what their predecessors never could have done, for the philosophy of human culture. For the tendency of their speculations compelled them to see in the character of the national education existing in any political society, at once the principal cause of its permanence as a society, and the chief source of its progressiveness: the former by the extent to which that education operated as a system of restraining discipline; the latter by the degree in which it called forth and invigorated the active faculties. Besides, not to have looked upon the culture of the inward

* There is something at once ridiculous and discouraging in the signs which daily meet us, of the Cimmerian darkness still prevailing in England (wherever recent foreign literature or the speculations of the Coleridgians have not penetrated) concerning the very existence of the views of general history, which have been received throughout the Continent of Europe for the last twenty or thirty years. A writer in Blackwood's Magazine, certainly not the least able publication of our day, nor this the least able writer in it, lately announced, with all the pomp and heraldry of triumphant genius, a discovery which was to disabuse the world of an universal prejudice, and create 'the philosophy of Roman history.' This is, that the Roman empire perished not from outward violence, but from inward decay; and that the barbarian conquerors were the renovators, not the destroyers of its civilization. Why, there is not a schoolboy in France or Germany who did not possess this writer's discovery before him; the contrary opinion has receded so far into the past, that it must be rather a learned Frenchman or German who remembers that it was ever held. If the writer in Blackwood had read a line of Guizot (to go no further than the most obvious sources), he would probably have abstained from making himself very ridiculous, and his country, so far as depends upon him, the laughing-stock of Europe.

man as the problem of problems, would have been incompatible with the belief which many of these philosophers entertained in Christianity, and the recognition by all of them of its historical value, and the prime part which it has acted in the progress of mankind. But here, too, let us not fail to observe, they rose to principles, and did not stick in the particular case. The culture of the human being had been carried to no ordinary height, and human nature had exhibited many of its noblest manifestations, not in Christian countries only, but in the ancient world, in Athens, Sparta, Rome; nay, even barbarians, as the Germans, or still more unmitigated savages, the wild Indians, and again the Chinese, the Egyptians, the Arabs, all had their own education, their own culture; a culture which, whatever might be its tendency upon the whole, had been successful in some respect or other. Every form of polity, every condition of society, whatever else it had done, had formed its type of national character. What that type was, and how it had been made what it was, were questions which the metaphysician might overlook, the historical philosopher could not. Accordingly, the views respecting the various elements of human culture and the causes influencing the formation of national character, which pervade the writings of the Germano-Coleridgian school, throw into the shade everything which had been effected before, or which has been attempted simultaneously by any other school. Such views are, more than anything else, the characteristic feature of the Goethian period of German literature; and are richly diffused through the historical and

critical writings of the new French school, as well as of Coleridge and his followers.

In this long, though most compressed, dissertation on the Continental philosophy preceding the reaction, and on the nature of the reaction, so far as directed against that philosophy, we have unavoidably been led to speak rather of the movement itself, than of Coleridge's particular share in it; which, from his posteriority in date, was necessarily a subordinate one. And it would be useless, even did our limits permit, to bring together from the scattered writings of a man who produced no systematic work, any of the fragments which he may have contributed to an edifice still incomplete, and even the general character of which, we can have rendered very imperfectly intelligible to those who are not acquainted with the theory itself. Our object is to invite to the study of the original sources, not to supply the place of such a study. What was peculiar to Coleridge will be better manifested, when we now proceed to review the state of popular philosophy immediately preceding him in our own island; which was different, in some material respects, from the contemporaneous Continental philosophy.

In England, the philosophical speculations of the age had not, except in a few highly metaphysical minds (whose example rather served to deter than to invite others), taken so audacious a flight, nor achieved anything like so complete a victory over the counteracting influences, as on the Continent. There is in the English mind, both in speculation and in

practice, a highly salutary shrinking from all extremes. But as this shrinking is rather an instinct of caution than a result of insight, it is too ready to satisfy itself with any medium, merely because it is a medium, and to acquiesce in a union of the disadvantages of both extremes instead of their advantages. The circumstances of the age, too, were unfavourable to decided opinions. The repose which followed the great struggles of the Reformation and the Commonwealth; the final victory over Popery and Puritanism, Jacobitism and Republicanism, and the lulling of the controversies which kept speculation and spiritual consciousness alive; the lethargy which came upon all governors and teachers, after their position in society became fixed; and the growing absorption of all classes in material interests—caused a state of mind to diffuse itself, with less of deep inward workings, and less capable of interpreting those it had, than had existed for centuries. The age seemed smitten with an incapacity of producing deep or strong feeling, such as at least could ally itself with meditative habits. There were few poets, and none of a high order; and philosophy fell mostly into the hands of men of a dry prosaic nature, who had not enough of the materials of human feeling in them to be able to imagine any of its more complex and mysterious manifestations; all of which they either left out of their theories, or introduced them with such explanations as no one who had experienced the feelings could receive as adequate. An age like this, an age without earnestness, was the natural era of compromises and half-convictions.

To make out a case for the feudal and ecclesiastical

institutions of modern Europe was by no means impossible: they had a meaning, had existed for honest ends, and an honest theory of them might be made. But the administration of those institutions had long ceased to accord with any honest theory. It was impossible to justify them in principle, except on grounds which condemned them in practice; and grounds of which there was at any rate little or no recognition in the philosophy of the eighteenth century. The natural tendency, therefore, of that philosophy, everywhere but in England, was to seek the extinction of those institutions. In England it would doubtless have done the same, had it been strong enough: but as this was beyond its strength, an adjustment was come to between the rival powers. What neither party cared about, the *ends* of existing institutions, the work that was to be done by teachers and governors, was flung overboard. The wages of that work the teachers and governors did care about, and those wages were secured to them. The existing institutions in Church and State were to be preserved inviolate, in outward semblance at least, but were required to be, practically, as much a nullity as possible. The Church continued to 'rear her mitred front in courts and palaces,' but not as in the days of Hildebrand or Becket, as the champion of arts against arms, of the serf against the seigneur, peace against war, or spiritual principles and powers against the domination of animal force. Nor even (as in the days of Latimer and John Knox) as a body divinely commissioned to train the nation in a knowledge of God and obedience to his laws, whatever became of temporal principalities and powers, and whether this

end might most effectually be compassed by their assistance or by trampling them under foot. No; but the people of England liked old things, and nobody knew how the place might be filled which the doing away with so conspicuous an institution would leave vacant, and *quieta ne movere* was the favourite doctrine of those times; therefore, on condition of not making too much noise about religion, or taking it too much in earnest, the church was supported, even by philosophers—as a 'bulwark against fanaticism,' a sedative to the religious spirit, to prevent it from disturbing the harmony of society or the tranquillity of states. The clergy of the establishment thought they had a good bargain on these terms, and kept its conditions very faithfully.

The State, again, was no longer considered, according to the old ideal, as a concentration of the force of all the individuals of the nation in the hands of certain of its members, in order to the accomplishment of whatever could be best accomplished by systematic co-operation. It was found that the State was a bad judge of the wants of society; that it in reality cared very little for them; and when it attempted anything beyond that police against crime, and arbitration of disputes, which are indispensable to social existence, the private sinister interest of some class or individual was usually the prompter of its proceedings. The natural inference would have been that the constitution of the State was somehow not suited to the existing wants of society; having indeed descended, with scarcely any modifications that could be avoided, from a time when the most prominent exigencies of society were quite different.

This conclusion, however, was shrunk from; and it required the peculiarities of very recent times, and the speculations of the Bentham school, to produce even any considerable tendency that way. The existing Constitution, and all the arrangements of existing society, continued to be applauded as the best possible. The celebrated theory of the three powers was got up, which made the excellence of our Constitution consist in doing less harm than would be done by any other form of government. Government altogether was regarded as a necessary evil, and was required to hide itself, to make itself as little felt as possible. The cry of the people was not 'help us,' 'guide us,' 'do for us the things we cannot do, and instruct us, that we may do well those which we can'—and truly such requirements from such rulers would have been a bitter jest: the cry was 'let us alone.' Power to decide questions of *meum* and *tuum*, to protect society from open violence, and from some of the most dangerous modes of fraud, could not be withheld; these functions the Government was left in possession of, and to these it became the expectation of the public that it should confine itself.

Such was the prevailing tone of English belief in temporals; what was it in spirituals? Here too a similar system of compromise had been at work. Those who pushed their philosophical speculations to the denial of the received religious belief, whether they went to the extent of infidelity or only of heterodoxy, met with little encouragement: neither religion itself, nor the received forms of it, were at all shaken by the few attacks which were made upon them from without. The philosophy, however, of the time, made

itself felt as effectually in another fashion; it pushed its way *into* religion. The *à priori* arguments for a God were first dismissed. This was indeed inevitable. The internal evidences of Christianity shared nearly the same fate; if not absolutely thrown aside, they fell into the background, and were little thought of. The doctrine of Locke, that we have no *innate* moral sense, perverted into the doctrine that we have no moral sense at all, made it appear that we had not any capacity of judging from the doctrine itself, whether it was worthy to have come from a righteous Being. In forgetfulness of the most solemn warnings of the Author of Christianity, as well as of the Apostle who was the main diffuser of it through the world, belief in his religion was left to stand upon miracles—a species of evidence which, according to the universal belief of the early Christians themselves, was by no means peculiar to true religion: and it is melancholy to see on what frail reeds able defenders of Christianity preferred to rest, rather than upon that better evidence which alone gave to their so-called evidences any value as a collateral confirmation. In the interpretation of Christianity, the palpablest *bibliolatry* prevailed: if (with Coleridge) we may so term that superstitious worship of particular texts, which persecuted Galileo, and, in our own day, anathematized the discoveries of geology. Men whose faith in Christianity rested on the literal infallibility of the sacred volume, shrank in terror from the idea that it could have been included in the scheme of Providence that the human opinions and mental habits of the particular writers should be allowed to mix with and colour their mode of conceiving and of

narrating the divine transactions. Yet this slavery to the letter has not only raised every difficulty which envelopes the most unimportant passage in the Bible, into an objection to revelation, but has paralysed many a well-meant effort to bring Christianity home, as a consistent scheme, to human experience and capacities of apprehension; as if there was much of it which it was more prudent to leave *in nubibus*, lest, in the attempt to make the mind seize hold of it as a reality, some text might be found to stand in the way. It might have been expected that this idolatry of the words of Scripture would at least have saved its doctrines from being tampered with by human notions: but the contrary proved to be the effect; for the vague and sophistical mode of interpreting texts, which was necessary in order to reconcile what was manifestly irreconcilable, engendered a habit of playing fast and loose with Scripture, and finding in, or leaving out of it, whatever one pleased. Hence, while Christianity was, in theory and in intention, received and submitted to, with even 'prostration of the understanding' before it, much alacrity was in fact displayed in *accommodating* it to the received philosophy, and even to the popular notions of the time. To take only one example, but so signal a one as to be *instar omnium*. If there is any one requirement of Christianity less doubtful than another, it is that of being spiritually-minded; of loving and practising good from a pure love, simply because it is good. But one of the crotchets of the philosophy of the age was, that all virtue is self-interest; and accordingly, in the text-book adopted by the Church (in one of its universities) for instruction in moral

philosophy, the reason for doing good is declared to be, that God is stronger than we are, and is able to damn us if we do not. This is no exaggeration of the sentiments of Paley, and hardly even of the crudity of his language.

Thus, on the whole, England had neither the benefits, such as they were, of the new ideas nor of the old. We were just sufficiently under the influences of each, to render the other powerless. We had a Government, which we respected too much to attempt to change it, but not enough to trust it with any power, or look to it for any services that were not compelled. We had a Church, which had ceased to fulfil the honest purposes of a church, but which we made a great point of keeping up as the pretence or *simulacrum* of one. We had a highly spiritual religion (which we were instructed to obey from selfish motives), and the most mechanical and worldly notions on every other subject; and we were so much afraid of being wanting in reverence to each particular syllable of the book which contained our religion, that we let its most important meanings slip through our fingers, and entertained the most grovelling conceptions of its spirit and general purposes. This was not a state of things which could recommend itself to any earnest mind. It was sure in no great length of time to call forth two sorts of men—the one demanding the extinction of the institutions and creeds which had hitherto existed; the other, that they be made a reality: the one pressing the new doctrines to their utmost consequences; the other reasserting the best meaning and purposes of the old. The first

type attained its greatest height in Bentham; the last in Coleridge.

We hold that these two sorts of men, who seem to be, and believe themselves to be, enemies, are in reality allies. The powers they wield are opposite poles of one great force of progression. What was really hateful and contemptible was the state which preceded them, and which each, in its way, has been striving now for many years to improve. Each ought to hail with rejoicing the advent of the other. But most of all ought an enlightened Radical or Liberal to rejoice over such a Conservative as Coleridge. For such a Radical must know, that the Constitution and Church of England, and the religious opinions and political maxims professed by their supporters, are not mere frauds, nor sheer nonsense—have not been got up originally, and all along maintained, for the sole purpose of picking people's pockets; without aiming at, or being found conducive to, any honest end during the whole process. Nothing, of which this is a sufficient account, would have lasted a tithe of five, eight, or ten centuries, in the most improving period and (during much of that period) the most improving nation in the world. These things, we may depend upon it, were not always without much good in them, however little of it may now be left: and Reformers ought to hail the man as a brother Reformer who points out what this good is; what it is which we have a right to expect from things established—which they are bound to do for us, as the justification of their being established: so that they may be recalled to it and compelled to do it, or the

impossibility of their any longer doing it may be conclusively manifested. What is any case for reform good for, until it has passed this test? What mode is there of determining whether a thing is fit to exist, without first considering what purposes it exists for, and whether it be still capable of fulfilling them?

We have not room here to consider Coleridge's Conservative philosophy in all its aspects, or in relation to all the quarters from which objections might be raised against it. We shall consider it with relation to Reformers, and especially to Benthamites. We would assist them to determine whether they would have to do with Conservative philosophers or with Conservative dunces; and whether, since there are Tories, it be better that they should learn their Toryism from Lord Eldon, or even Sir Robert Peel, or from Coleridge.

Take, for instance, Coleridge's view of the grounds of a Church Establishment. His mode of treating any institution is to investigate what he terms the Idea of it, or what in common parlance would be called the principle involved in it. The idea or principle of a national church, and of the Church of England in that character, is, according to him, the reservation of a portion of the land, or of a right to a portion of its produce, as a fund—for what purpose? For the worship of God? For the performance of religious ceremonies? No; for the advancement of knowledge, and the civilization and cultivation of the community. This fund he does not term Church-property, but 'the nationalty,' or national property. He considers it as destined for 'the support and maintenance of a permanent class or order, with the following duties. A certain smaller

number were to remain at the fountain-heads of the humanities, in cultivating and enlarging the knowledge already possessed, and in watching over the interests of physical and moral science; being likewise the instructors of such as constituted, or were to constitute, the remaining more numerous classes of the order. The members of this latter and far more numerous body were to be distributed throughout the country, so as not to leave even the smallest integral part or division without a resident guide, guardian, and instructor; the objects and final intention of the whole order being these—to preserve the stores and to guard the treasures of past civilization, and thus to bind the present with the past; to perfect and add to the same, and thus to connect the present with the future; but especially to diffuse through the whole community, and to every native entitled to its laws and rights, that quantity and quality of knowledge which was indispensable both for the understanding of those rights, and for the performance of the duties correspondent; finally, to secure for the nation, if not a superiority over the neighbouring states, yet an equality at least, in that character of general civilization, which equally with, or rather more than, fleets, armies, and revenue, forms the ground of its defensive and offensive power.'

This organized body, set apart and endowed for the cultivation and diffusion of knowledge, is not, in Coleridge's view, necessarily a religious corporation. 'Religion may be an indispensable ally, but is not the essential constitutive end, of that national institute, which is unfortunately, at least improperly, styled the Church; a name which, in its best sense, is exclusively

appropriate to the Church of Christ. . . . . The *clerisy* of the nation, or national church in its primary acceptation and original intention, comprehended the learned of all denominations, the sages and professors of the law and jurisprudence, of medicine and physiology, of music, of military and civil architecture, with the mathematical as the common organ of the preceding; in short, all the so-called liberal arts and sciences, the possession and application of which constitute the civilization of a country, as well as the theological. The last was, indeed, placed at the head of all; and of good right did it claim the precedence. But why? Because under the name of theology or divinity were contained the interpretation of languages, the conservation and tradition of past events, the momentous epochs and revolutions of the race and nation, the continuation of the records, logic, ethics, and the determination of ethical science, in application to the rights and duties of men in all their various relations, social and civil; and lastly, the ground-knowledge, the *prima scientia*, as it was named,—philosophy, or the doctrine and discipline of ideas.

'Theology formed only a part of the objects, the theologians formed only a portion of the clerks or clergy, of the national Church. The theological order had precedency indeed, and deservedly; but not because its members were priests, whose office was to conciliate the invisible powers, and to superintend the interests that survive the grave; nor as being exclusively, or even principally, sacerdotal or templar, which, when it did occur, is to be considered as an accident of the age, a misgrowth of ignorance and oppression, a falsification of the constitutive principle,

not a constituent part of the same. No; the theologians took the lead, because the science of theology was the root and the trunk of the knowledge of civilized man: because it gave unity and the circulating sap of life to all other sciences, by virtue of which alone they could be contemplated as forming collectively the living tree of knowledge. It had the precedency because, under the name theology, were comprised all the main aids, instruments, and materials of national education, the *nisus formativus* of the body politic, the shaping and informing spirit, which, educing or eliciting the latent man in all the natives of the soil, trains them up to be citizens of the country, free subjects of the realm. And, lastly, because to divinity belong those fundamental truths which are the common groundwork of our civil and our religious duties, not less indispensable to a right view of our temporal concerns than to a rational faith respecting our immortal well-being. Not without celestial observations can even terrestrial charts be accurately constructed.'—*Church and State*, chap. v.

The nationalty, or national property, according to Coleridge, 'cannot rightfully, and without foul wrong to the nation never has been, alienated from its original purposes,' from the promotion of 'a continuing and progressive civilization,' to the benefit of individuals, or any public purpose of merely economical or material interest. But the State may withdraw the fund from its actual holders, for the better execution of its purposes. There is no sanctity attached to the means, but only to the ends. The fund is not dedicated to any particular scheme of religion, nor even to religion at all; religion has only to do with it

in the character of an instrument of civilization, and in common with all the other instruments. 'I do not assert that the proceeds from the nationalty cannot be rightfully vested, except in what we now mean by clergymen and the established clergy. I have everywhere implied the contrary. . . . . In relation to the national church, Christianity, or the Church of Christ, is a blessed accident, a providential boon, a grace of God. . . . . As the olive tree is said in its growth to fertilize the surrounding soil, to invigorate the roots of the vines in its immediate neighbourhood, and to improve the strength and flavour of the wines; such is the relation of the Christian and the national Church. But as the olive is not the same plant with the vine, or with the elm or poplar (that is, the State) with which the vine is wedded; and as the vine, with its prop, may exist, though in less perfection, without the olive, or previously to its implantation; even so is Christianity, and *à fortiori* any particular scheme of theology derived, and supposed by its partisans to be deduced, from Christianity, no essential part of the being of the national Church, however conducive or even indispensable it may be to its well-being.'—chap. vi.

What would Sir Robert Inglis, or Sir Robert Peel, or Mr. Spooner say to such a doctrine as this? Will they thank Coleridge for this advocacy of Toryism? What would become of the three years' debates on the Appropriation Clause, which so disgraced this country before the face of Europe? Will the ends of practical Toryism be much served by a theory under which the Royal Society might claim a part of the Church property with as good right as the bench of

bishops, if, by endowing that body like the French Institute, science could be better promoted ? a theory by which the State, in the conscientious exercise of its judgment, having decided that the Church of England does not fulfil the object for which the nationalty was intended, might transfer its endowments to any other ecclesiastical body, or to any other body not ecclesiastical, which it deemed more competent to fulfil those objects; might establish any other sect, or all sects, or no sect at all, if it should deem that in the divided condition of religious opinion in this country, the State can no longer with advantage attempt the complete religious instruction of its people, but must for the present content itself with providing secular instruction, and such religious teaching, if any, as all can take part in; leaving each sect to apply to its own communion that which they all agree in considering as the keystone of the arch? We believe this to be the true state of affairs in Great Britain at the present time. We are far from thinking it other than a serious evil. We entirely acknowledge, that in any person fit to be a teacher, the view he takes of religion will be intimately connected with the view he will take of all the greatest things which he has to teach. Unless the same teachers who give instruction on those other subjects, are at liberty to enter freely on religion, the scheme of education will be, to a certain degree, fragmentary and incoherent. But the State at present has only the option of such an imperfect scheme, or of entrusting the whole business to perhaps the most unfit body for the exclusive charge of it that could be found among persons of any intellectual attainments, namely, the established

clergy as at present trained and composed. Such a body would have no chance of being selected as the exclusive administrators of the nationalty, on any foundation but that of divine right; the ground avowedly taken by the only other school of Conservative philosophy which is attempting to raise its head in this country—that of the new Oxford theologians.

Coleridge's merit in this matter consists, as it seems to us, in two things. First, that by setting in a clear light what a national church establishment ought to be, and what, by the very fact of its existence, it must be held to pretend to be, he has pronounced the severest satire upon what in fact it is. There is some difference, truly, between Coleridge's church, in which the schoolmaster forms the first step in the hierarchy, 'who, in due time, and under condition of a faithful performance of his arduous duties, should succeed to the pastorate,'* and the Church of England such as we now see. But to say the Church, and mean only the clergy, 'constituted,' according to Coleridge's conviction, 'the first and fundamental apostasy.'† He, and the thoughts which have proceeded from him, have done more than would have been effected in thrice the time by Dissenters and Radicals, to make the Church ashamed of the evil of her ways, and to determine that movement of improvement from within, which has begun where it ought to begin, at the Universities and among the younger clergy, and which, if this sect-ridden country is ever to be really taught, must proceed *pari passu* with the assault carried on from without.

Secondly, we honour Coleridge for having rescued

* P. 57. † 'Literary Remains,' iii. 386.

from the discredit in which the corruptions of the English Church had involved everything connected with it, and for having vindicated against Bentham and Adam Smith and the whole eighteenth century, the principle of an endowed class, for the cultivation of learning, and for diffusing its results among the community. That such a class is likely to be behind, instead of before, the progress of knowledge, is an induction erroneously drawn from the peculiar circumstances of the last two centuries, and in contradiction to all the rest of modern history. If we have seen much of the abuses of endowments, we have not seen what this country might be made by a proper administration of them, as we trust we shall not see what it would be without them. On this subject we are entirely at one with Coleridge, and with the other great defender of endowed establishments, Dr. Chalmers; and we consider the definitive establishment of this fundamental principle, to be one of the permanent benefits which political science owes to the Conservative philosophers.

Coleridge's theory of the Constitution is not less worthy of notice than his theory of the Church. The Delolme and Blackstone doctrine, the balance of the three powers, he declares he never could elicit one ray of common sense from, no more than from the balance of trade.* There is, however, according to him, an Idea of the Constitution, of which he says—

'Because our whole history, from Alfred onwards, demonstrates the continued influence of such an idea, or ultimate aim, in the minds of our forefathers, in their characters and functions as public men, alike in

* 'The Friend,' first collected edition (1818), vol. ii. p. 75.

what they resisted and what they claimed; in the institutions and forms of polity which they established, and with regard to those against which they more or less successfully contended; and because the result has been a progressive, though not always a direct or equable, advance in the gradual realization of the idea; and because it is actually, though (even because it is an idea) not adequately, represented in a correspondent scheme of means really existing; we speak, and have a right to speak, of the idea itself as actually existing, that is, as a principle existing in the only way in which a principle can exist—in the minds and consciences of the persons whose duties it prescribes, and whose rights it determines.'* This fundamental idea 'is at the same time the final criterion by which all particular frames of government must be tried: for here only can we find the great constructive principles of our representative system: those principles in the light of which it can alone be ascertained what are excrescences, symptoms of distemperature, and marks of degeneration, and what are native growths, or changes naturally attendant on the progressive development of the original germ, symptoms of immaturity, perhaps, but not of disease; or, at worst, modifications of the growth by the defective or faulty, but remediless or only gradually remediable, qualities of the soil and surrounding elements.'†

Of these principles he gives the following account:—

'It is the chief of many blessings derived from the insular character and circumstances of our country, that our social institutions have formed themselves out of our proper needs and interests; that long and

* 'Church and State,' p. 18. † Ib. p. 19.

fierce as the birth-struggle and growing pains have been, the antagonist powers have been of our own system, and have been allowed to work out their final balance with less disturbance from external forces than was possible in the Continental States. . . Now, in every country of civilized men, or acknowledging the rights of property, and by means of determined boundaries and common laws united into one people or nation, the two antagonist powers or opposite interests of the State, under which all other State interests are comprised, are those of *permanence* and of *progression*.'

The interest of permanence, or the Conservative interest, he considers to be naturally connected with the land, and with landed property. This doctrine, false in our opinion as an universal principle, is true of England, and of all countries where landed property is accumulated in large masses.

'On the other hand,' he says, 'the progression of a State, in the arts and comforts of life, in the diffusion of the information and knowledge useful or necessary for all; in short, all advances in civilization, and the rights and privileges of citizens, are especially connected with, and derived from, the four classes,—the mercantile, the manufacturing, the distributive, and the professional.'* (We must omit the interesting historical illustrations of this maxim.) 'These four last-mentioned classes I will designate by the name of the Personal Interest, as the exponent of all moveable and personal possessions, including skill and acquired knowledge, the moral and intellectual stock in trade of the professional man and the artist, no less than the

* 'Church and State,' pp. 23-4.

raw materials, and the means of elaborating, transporting, and distributing them.'*

The interest of permanence, then, is provided for by a representation of the landed proprietors; that of progression, by a representation of personal property and of intellectual acquirement: and while one branch of the Legislature, the Peerage, is essentially given over to the former, he considers it a part both of the general theory and of the actual English constitution, that the representatives of the latter should form 'the clear and effectual majority of the Lower House;' or if not, that at least, by the added influence of public opinion, they should exercise an effective preponderance there. That 'the very weight intended for the effectual counterpoise of the great landholders' has 'in the course of events, been shifted into the opposite scale;' that the members for the towns 'now constitute a large proportion of the political power and influence of the very class of men whose personal cupidity and whose partial views of the landed interest at large they were meant to keep in check;'—these things he acknowledges: and only suggests a doubt, whether roads, canals, machinery, the press, and other influences favourable to the popular side, do not constitute an equivalent force to supply the deficiency.†

How much better a Parliamentary Reformer, then, is Coleridge, than Lord John Russell, or any Whig who stickles for maintaining this unconstitutional omnipotence of the landed interest. If these became the principles of Tories, we should not wait long for further reform, even in our organic institutions. It

* 'Church and State,' p 29. † Ib. pp. 31-2.

is true Coleridge disapproved of the Reform Bill, or rather of the principle, or the no-principle, on which it was supported. He saw in it (as we may surmise) the dangers of a change amounting almost to a revolution, without any real tendency to remove those defects in the machine, which alone could justify a change so extensive. And that this is nearly a true view of the matter, all parties seem to be now agreed. The Reform Bill was not calculated materially to improve the general composition of the Legislature. The good it has done, which is considerable, consists chiefly in this, that being so great a change, it has weakened the superstitious feeling against great changes. Any good, which is contrary to the selfish interest of the dominant class, is still only to be effected by a long and arduous struggle: but improvements, which threaten no powerful body in their social importance or in their pecuniary emoluments, are no longer resisted as they once were, because of their greatness—because of the very benefit which they promised. Witness the speedy passing of the Poor Law Amendment and the Penny Postage Acts.

Meanwhile, though Coleridge's theory is but a mere commencement, not amounting to the first lines of a political philosophy, has the age produced any other theory of government which can stand a comparison with it as to its first principles? Let us take, for example, the Benthamic theory. The principle of this may be said to be, that since the general interest is the object of government, a complete control over the government ought to be given to those whose interest is identical with the general interest. The authors and propounders of this theory were men of

extraordinary intellectual powers, and the greater part of what they meant by it is true and important. But when considered as the foundation of a science, it would be difficult to find among theories proceeding from philosophers one less like a philosophical theory, or, in the works of analytical minds, anything more entirely unanalytical. What can a philosopher make of such complex notions as 'interest' and 'general interest,' without breaking them down into the elements of which they are composed? If by men's interest be meant what would appear such to a calculating bystander, judging what would be good for a man during his whole life, and making no account, or but little, of the gratification of his present passions, his pride, his envy, his vanity, his cupidity, his love of pleasure, his love of ease—it may be questioned whether, in this sense, the interest of an aristocracy, and still more that of a monarch, would not be as accordant with the general interest as that of either the middle or the poorer classes; and if men's interest, in this understanding of it, usually governed their conduct, absolute monarchy would probably be the best form of government. But since men usually do what they like, often being perfectly aware that it is not for their ultimate interest, still more often that it is not for the interest of their posterity; and when they do believe that the object they are seeking is permanently good for them, almost always overrating its value; it is necessary to consider, not who are they whose permanent interest, but who are they whose immediate interests and habitual feelings, are likely to be most in accordance with the end we seek to obtain. And as that end (the general good) is a

very complex state of things, comprising as its component elements many requisites which are neither of one and the same nature, nor attainable by one and the same means—political philosophy must begin by a classification of these elements, in order to distinguish those of them which go naturally together (so that the provision made for one will suffice for the rest), from those which are ordinarily in a state of antagonism, or at least of separation, and require to be provided for apart. This preliminary classification being supposed, things would, in a perfect government, be so ordered, that corresponding to each of the great interests of society, there would be some branch or some integral part of the governing body, so constituted that it should not be merely deemed by philosophers, but actually and constantly deem itself, to have its strongest interests involved in the maintenance of that one of the ends of society which it is intended to be the guardian of. This, we say, is the thing to be aimed at, the type of perfection in a political constitution. Not that there is a possibility of making more than a limited approach to it in practice. A government must be composed out of the elements already existing in society, and the distribution of power in the constitution cannot vary much or long from the distribution of it in society itself. But wherever the circumstances of society allow any choice, wherever wisdom and contrivance are at all available, this, we conceive, is the principle of guidance; and whatever anywhere exists is imperfect and a failure, just so far as it recedes from this type.

Such a philosophy of government, we need hardly

say, is in its infancy: the first step to it, the classification of the exigencies of society, has not been made. Bentham, in his 'Principles of Civil Law,' has given a specimen, very useful for many other purposes, but not available, nor intended to be so, for founding a theory of representation upon it. For that particular purpose we have seen nothing comparable as far as it goes, notwithstanding its manifest insufficiency, to Coleridge's division of the interests of society into the two antagonist interests of Permanence and Progression. The Continental philosophers have, by a different path, arrived at the same division; and this is about as far, probably, as the science of political institutions has yet reached.

In the details of Coleridge's political opinions there is much good, and much that is questionable, or worse. In political economy especially he writes like an arrant driveller, and it would have been well for his reputation had he never meddled with the subject.* But this department of knowledge can now take care of itself. On other points we meet with far-reaching remarks, and a tone of general feeling sufficient to make a Tory's hair stand on end. Thus, in the work from which we have most quoted, he calls the State policy of the last half-century 'a Cyclops with one eye, and that in the back of the head'—its measures 'either a series of anachronisms, or a truckling to events instead of the science that should command

* Yet even on this subject he has occasionally a just thought, happily expressed; as this: 'Instead of the position that all things find, it would be less equivocal and far more descriptive of the fact to say, that things are always finding their level; which might be taken as the paraphrase or ironical definition of a storm.'—'Second Lay Sermon,' p. 403.

them.'* He styles the great Commonwealthsmen 'the stars of that narrow interspace of blue sky between the black clouds of the First and Second Charles's reigns.'† The 'Literary Remains' are full of disparaging remarks on many of the heroes of Toryism and Church-of-Englandism. He sees, for instance, no difference between Whitgift and Bancroft, and Bonner and Gardiner, except that the last were the most consistent—that the former sinned against better knowledge;‡ and one of the most poignant of his writings is a character of Pitt, the very reverse of panegyrical § As a specimen of his practical views, we have mentioned his recommendation that the parochial clergy should begin by being schoolmasters. He urges 'a different division and subdivision of the kingdom' instead of 'the present barbarism, which forms an obstacle to the improvement of the country of much greater magnitude than men are generally aware.'‖ But we must confine ourselves to instances in which he has helped to bring forward great principles, either implied in the old English opinions and institutions, or at least opposed to the new tendencies.

For example, he is at issue with the *let alone* doctrine, or the theory that governments can do no better than to do nothing; a doctrine generated by the manifest selfishness and incompetence of modern European governments, but of which, as a general theory, we may now be permitted to say, that one

* 'Church and State,' p. 69. † Ib. p. 102.

‡ 'Literary Remains,' ii. 388.

§ Written in the Morning Post, and now (as we rejoice to see) reprinted in Mr. Gillman's biographical memoirs.

‖ 'Literary Remains,' p. 56.

half of it is true and the other half false. All who are on a level with their age now readily admit that government ought not to *interdict* men from publishing their opinions, pursuing their employments, or buying and selling their goods, in whatever place or manner they deem the most advantageous. Beyond suppressing force and fraud, governments can seldom, without doing more harm than good, attempt to chain up the free agency of individuals. But does it follow from this that government cannot exercise a free agency of its own?—that it cannot beneficially employ its powers, its means of information, and its pecuniary resources (so far surpassing those of any other association, or of any individual), in promoting the public welfare by a thousand means which individuals would never think of, would have no sufficient motives to attempt, or no sufficient powers to accomplish? To confine ourselves to one, and that a limited view of the subject: a State ought to be considered as a great benefit society, or mutual insurance company, for helping (under the necessary regulations for preventing abuse) that large proportion of its members who cannot help themselves.

'Let us suppose,' says Coleridge, 'the negative ends of a State already attained, namely, its own safety by means of its own strength, and the protection of person and property for all its members; there will then remain its positive ends:—1. To make the means of subsistence more easy to each individual: 2. To secure to each of its members the hope of bettering his own condition or that of his children: 3. The development of those faculties which are essential to his humanity, that is, to his rational and moral being.'*

* 'Second Lay Sermon,' p. 414.

In regard to the two former ends, he of course does not mean that they can be accomplished merely by making laws to that effect; or that, according to the wild doctrines now afloat, it is the fault of the government if every one has not enough to eat and drink. But he means that government can do something directly, and very much indirectly, to promote even the physical comfort of the people; and that if, besides making a proper use of its own powers, it would exert itself to teach the people what is in theirs, indigence would soon disappear from the face of the earth.

Perhaps, however, the greatest service which Coleridge has rendered to politics in his capacity of a Conservative philosopher, though its fruits are mostly yet to come, is in reviving the idea of a *trust* inherent in landed property. The land, the gift of nature, the source of subsistence to all, and the foundation of everything that influences our physical well-being, cannot be considered a subject of *property*, in the same absolute sense in which men are deemed proprietors of that in which no one has any interest but themselves—that which they have actually called into existence by their own bodily exertion. As Coleridge points out, such a notion is altogether of modern growth.

'The very idea of individual or private property in our present acceptation of the term, and according to the current notion of the right to it, was originally confined to moveable things; and the more moveable, the more susceptible of the nature of property.'*

By the early institutions of Europe, property in

* 'Second Lay Sermon,' p. 414.

land was a public function, created for certain public purposes, and held under condition of their fulfilment; and as such, we predict, under the modifications suited to modern society, it will again come to be considered. In this age, when everything is called in question, and when the foundation of private property itself needs to be argumentatively maintained against plausible and persuasive sophisms, one may easily see the danger of mixing up what is not really tenable with what is—and the impossibility of maintaining an absolute right in an individual to an unrestricted control, a *jus utendi et abutendi*, over an unlimited quantity of the mere raw material of the globe, to which every other person could originally make out as good a natural title as himself. It will certainly not be much longer tolerated that agriculture should be carried on (as Coleridge expresses it) on the same principles as those of trade; 'that a gentleman should regard his estate as a merchant his cargo, or a shopkeeper his stock;'* that he should be allowed to deal with it as if it only existed to yield rent to him, not food to the numbers whose hands till it; and should have a right, and a right possessing all the sacredness of property, to turn them out by hundreds and make them perish on the high road, as has been done before now by Irish landlords. We believe it will soon be thought, that a mode of property in land which has brought things to this pass, has existed long enough.

We shall not be suspected (we hope) of recommending a general resumption of landed possessions, or the depriving any one, without compensation, of

* 'Second Lay Sermon,' p. 414.

anything which the law gives him. But we say that when the State allows any one to exercise ownership over more land than suffices to raise by his own labour his subsistence and that of his family, it confers on him power over other human beings—power affecting them in their most vital interests; and that no notion of private property can bar the right which the State inherently possesses, to require that the power which it has so given shall not be abused. We say, also, that, by giving this direct power over so large a portion of the community, indirect power is necessarily conferred over all the remaining portion; and this, too, it is the duty of the State to place under proper control. Further, the tenure of land, the various rights connected with it, and the system on which its cultivation is carried on, are points of the utmost importance both to the economical and to the moral well-being of the whole community. And the State fails in one of its highest obligations, unless it takes these points under its particular superintendence; unless, to the full extent of its power, it takes means of providing that the manner in which land is held, the mode and degree of its division, and every other peculiarity which influences the mode of its cultivation, shall be the most favourable possible for making the best use of the land: for drawing the greatest benefit from its productive resources, for securing the happiest existence to those employed on it, and for setting the greatest number of hands free to employ their labour for the benefit of the community in other ways. We believe that these opinions will become, in no very long period, universal throughout Europe. And we gratefully bear testimony to the fact, that

the first among us who has given the sanction of philosophy to so great a reform in the popular and current notions, is a Conservative philosopher.

Of Coleridge as a moral and religious philosopher (the character which he presents most prominently in his principal works), there is neither room, nor would it be expedient for us to speak more than generally. On both subjects, few men have ever combined so much earnestness with so catholic and unsectarian a spirit. 'We have imprisoned,' says he, 'our own conceptions by the lines which we have drawn in order to exclude the conceptions of others. *J'ai trouvé que la plupart des sectes ont raison dans une bonne partie de ce qu'elles avancent, mais non pas tant en ce qu'elles nient.*'* That almost all sects, both in philosophy and religion, are right in the positive part of their tenets, though commonly wrong in the negative, is a doctrine which he professes as strongly as the eclectic school in France. Almost all errors he holds to be 'truths misunderstood,' 'half-truths taken as the whole,' though not the less, but the more dangerous on that account.† Both the theory and practice of enlightened tolerance in matters of opinion, might be exhibited in extracts from his writings more copiously than in those of any other writer we know; though there are a few (and but a few) exceptions to his own practice of it. In the theory of ethics, he contends against the doctrine of general consequences, and holds that, *for man*, 'to obey the simple unconditional commandment of eschewing every act that implies a self-contradiction'—so to act as to 'be able,

* 'Biographia Literaria,' ed. 1817, vol. i. p. 249.
† 'Literary Remains,' iii. 145.

without involving any contradiction, to will that the maxim of thy conduct should be the law of all intelligent beings,—is the one universal and sufficient principle and guide of morality.'* Yet even a utilitarian can have little complaint to make of a philosopher who lays it down that 'the *outward* object of virtue' is 'the greatest producible sum of happiness of all men,' and that 'happiness in its proper sense is but the continuity and sum-total of the pleasure which is allotted or happens to a man.'†

But his greatest object was to bring into harmony Religion and Philosophy. He laboured incessantly to establish that 'the Christian faith—in which,' says he, 'I include every article of belief and doctrine professed by the first reformers in common'—is not only divine truth, but also 'the perfection of Human Intelligence.'‡ All that Christianity has revealed, philosophy, according to him, can prove, though there is much which it could never have discovered; human reason, once strengthened by Christianity, can evolve all the Christian doctrines from its own sources.§ Moreover, 'if infidelity is not to overspread England as well as France,'‖ the Scripture, and every passage of Scripture, must be submitted to this test; inasmuch as 'the compatibility of a document with the conclusions of self-evident reason, and with the laws of conscience, is a condition *à priori* of any evidence adequate to the proof of its having been revealed by God;' and this, he says, is no philosophical novelty,

* 'The Friend,' vol. i. pp. 256 and 340.
† 'Aids to Reflection,' pp. 37 and 39.
‡ Preface to the 'Aids to Reflection.'
§ 'Literary Remains,' vol. i. p. 388. ‖ Ib. iii. 263.

but a principle 'clearly laid down both by Moses and St. Paul.'* He thus goes quite as far as the Unitarians in making man's reason and moral feelings a test of revelation; but differs *toto cœlo* from them in their rejection of its mysteries, which he regards as the highest philosophic truths, and says that 'the Christian to whom, after a long profession of Christianity, the mysteries remain as much mysteries as before, is in the same state as a schoolboy with regard to his arithmetic, to whom the *facit* at the end of the examples in his cyphering-book is the whole ground for his assuming that such and such figures amount to so and so.'

These opinions are not likely to be popular in the religious world, and Coleridge knew it: 'I quite calculate,'† said he once, 'on my being one day or other holden in worse repute by many Christians than the 'Unitarians' and even 'Infidels.' It must be undergone by every one who loves the truth for its own sake beyond all other things.' For our part, we are not bound to defend him; and we must admit that, in his attempt to arrive at theology by way of philosophy, we see much straining, and most frequently, as it appears to us, total failure. The question, however, is not whether Coleridge's attempts are successful, but whether it is desirable or not that such attempts should be made. Whatever some religious people may think, philosophy will and must go on, ever seeking to understand whatever can be made understandable; and, whatever some philosophers may think, there is little prospect at present that philosophy will take the place of religion, or that any

* 'Literary Remains,' iii. p. 293. † 'Table Talk,' 2nd ed. p. 91.

philosophy will be speedily received in this country, unless supposed not only to be consistent with, but even to yield collateral support to, Christianity. What is the use, then, of treating with contempt the idea of a religious philosophy? Religious philosophies are among the things to be looked for, and our main hope ought to be that they may be such as fulfil the conditions of a philosophy—the very foremost of which is, unrestricted freedom of thought. There is no philosophy possible where fear of consequences is a stronger principle than love of truth; where speculation is paralyzed, either by the belief that conclusions honestly arrived at will be punished by a just and good Being with eternal damnation, or by seeing in every text of Scripture a foregone conclusion, with which the results of inquiry must, at any expense of sophistry and self-deception, be made to quadrate.

From both these withering influences, that have so often made the acutest intellects exhibit specimens of obliquity and imbecility in their theological speculations which have made them the pity of subsequent generations, Coleridge's mind was perfectly free. Faith—the faith which is placed among religious duties—was, in his view, a state of the will and of the affections, not of the understanding. Heresy, in 'the literal sense and scriptural import of the word,' is, according to him, 'wilful error, or belief originating in some perversion of the will;' he says, therefore, that there may be orthodox heretics, since indifference to truth may as well be shown on the right side of the question as on the wrong; and denounces, in strong language, the contrary doctrine of the

'pseudo-Athanasius,' who 'interprets Catholic faith by belief,'* an act of the understanding alone. The 'true Lutheran doctrine,' he says, is, that 'neither will truth, as a mere conviction of the understanding, save, nor error condemn. To love truth sincerely is spiritually to have truth; and an error becomes a personal error, not by its aberration from logic or history, but so far as the causes of such error are in the heart, or may be traced back to some antecedent unchristian wish or habit.'† 'The unmistakable passions of a factionary and a schismatic, the ostentatious display, the ambitious and dishonest arts of a sect-founder, must be superinduced on the false doctrine before the heresy makes the man a heretic.'‡

Against the other terror, so fatal to the unshackled exercise of reason on the greatest questions, the view which Coleridge took of the authority of the Scriptures was a preservative. He drew the strongest distinction between the inspiration which he owned in the various writers, and an express dictation by the Almighty of every word they wrote. 'The notion of the absolute truth and divinity of every syllable of the text of the books of the Old and New Testament as we have it,' he again and again asserts to be unsupported by the Scripture itself; to be one of those superstitions in which 'there is a heart of unbelief;'§ to be, 'if possible, still more extravagant' than the Papal infallibility; and declares that the very same arguments are used for both doctrines.‖ God, he believes, informed

* 'Literary Remains,' iv. 193. † Ib. iii. 159. ‡ Ib. p. 245.

§ 'Literary Remains,' iii. 229; see also pp. 254, 323, and many other passages in the 3rd and 4th volumes.

‖ 'Literary Remains,' ii. 385.

the minds of the writers with the truths he meant to reveal, and left the rest to their human faculties. He pleaded most earnestly, says his nephew and editor, for this liberty of criticism with respect to the Scriptures, as 'the only middle path of safety and peace between a godless disregard of the unique and transcendent character of the Bible, taken generally, and that scheme of interpretation, scarcely less adverse to the pure spirit of Christian wisdom, which wildly arrays our faith in opposition to our reason, and inculcates the sacrifice of the latter to the former; for he threw up his hands in dismay at the language of some of our modern divinity on this point, as if a faith not founded on insight were aught else than a specious name for wilful positiveness; as if the Father of Lights could require, or would accept, from the only one of his creatures whom he had endowed with reason, the sacrifice of fools! . . . . Of the aweless doctrine that God might, if he had so pleased, have given to man a religion which to human intelligence should not be rational, and exacted his faith in it, Coleridge's whole middle and later life was one deep and solemn denial.'* He bewails 'bibliolatry' as the pervading error of modern Protestant divinity, and the great stumbling-block of Christianity, and exclaims,† 'O might I live but to utter all my meditations on this most concerning point . . . in what sense the Bible may be called the word of God, and how and under what conditions the unity of the Spirit is translucent through the letter, which, read as the letter merely, is the word of this and that pious, but fallible and im-

* Preface to the 3rd volume of the 'Literary Remains.'
† 'Literary Remains,' iv. 6.

perfect, man.' It is known that he did live to write down these meditations; and speculations so important will one day, it is devoutly to be hoped, be given to the world.*

Theological discussion is beyond our province, and it is not for us, in this place, to judge these sentiments of Coleridge; but it is clear enough that they are not the sentiments of a bigot, or of one who is to be dreaded by Liberals, lest he should illiberalize the minds of the rising generation of Tories and High-Churchmen. We think the danger is rather lest they should find him vastly too liberal. And yet, now when the most orthodox divines, both in the Church and out of it, find it necessary to explain away the obvious sense of the whole first chapter of Genesis, or failing to do that, consent to disbelieve it provisionally, on the speculation that there may hereafter be discovered a sense in which it can be believed, one would think the time gone by for expecting to learn from the Bible what it never could have been intended to communicate, and to find in all its statements a literal truth neither necessary nor conducive to what the volume itself declares to be the ends of revelation. Such at least was Coleridge's opinion: and whatever influence such an opinion may have over Conservatives, it cannot do other than make them less bigots, and better philosophers.

But we must close this long essay: long in itself, though short in its relation to its subject, and to the multitude of topics involved in it. We do not pretend

* [This wish has, to a certain extent, been fulfilled by the publication of the series of letters on the Inspiration of the Scriptures, which bears the not very appropriate name of 'Confessions of an Inquiring Spirit.']

to have given any sufficient account of Coleridge; but we hope we may have proved to some, not previously aware of it, that there is something both in him, and in the school to which he belongs, not unworthy of their better knowledge. We may have done something to show that a Tory philosopher cannot be wholly a Tory, but must often be a better Liberal than Liberals themselves; while he is the natural means of rescuing from oblivion truths which Tories have forgotten, and which the prevailing schools of Liberalism never knew.

And even if a Conservative philosophy were an absurdity, it is well calculated to drive out a hundred absurdities worse than itself. Let no one think that it is nothing, to accustom people to give a reason for their opinion, be the opinion ever so untenable, the reason ever so insufficient. A person accustomed to submit his fundamental tenets to the test of reason, will be more open to the dictates of reason on every other point. Not from him shall we have to apprehend the owl-like dread of light, the drudge-like aversion to change, which were the characteristics of the old unreasoning race of bigots. A man accustomed to contemplate the fair side of Toryism (the side that every attempt at a philosophy of it must bring to view), and to defend the existing system by the display of its capabilities as an engine of public good,—such a man, when he comes to administer the system, will be more anxious than another person to realize those capabilities, to bring the fact a little nearer to the specious theory. 'Lord, enlighten thou our enemies,' should be the prayer of every true Reformer; sharpen their wits, give acuteness to their

perceptions, and consecutiveness and clearness to their reasoning powers: we are in danger from their folly, not from their wisdom; their weakness is what fills us with apprehension, not their strength.

For ourselves, we are not so blinded by our particular opinions as to be ignorant that in this and in every other country of Europe, the great mass of the owners of large property, and of all the classes intimately connected with the owners of large property, are, and must be expected to be, in the main, Conservative. To suppose that so mighty a body can be without immense influence in the commonwealth, or to lay plans for effecting great changes, either spiritual or temporal, in which they are left out of the question, would be the height of absurdity. Let those who desire such changes, ask themselves if they are content that these classes should be, and remain, to a man, banded against them; and what progress they expect to make, or by what means, unless a process of preparation shall be going on in the minds of these very classes; not by the impracticable method of converting them from Conservatives into Liberals, but by their being led to adopt one liberal opinion after another, as a part of Conservatism itself. The first step to this, is to inspire them with the desire to systematize and rationalize their own actual creed: and the feeblest attempt to do this has an intrinsic value; far more, then, one which has so much in it, — both of moral goodness and true insight, as the philosophy of Coleridge.

APPENDIX.*

FROM the principle of the necessity of identifying the interest of the government with that of the people, most of the practical maxims of a representative government are corollaries. All popular institutions are means towards rendering the identity of interest more complete. We say *more* complete, because (and this it is important to remark) perfectly complete it can never be. An approximation is all that is, in the nature of things, possible. By pushing to its utmost extent the accountability of governments to the people, you indeed take away from them the power of prosecuting their own interests at the expense of the people by force, but you leave to them the whole range and compass of fraud. An attorney is accountable to his client, and removable at his client's pleasure; but we should scarcely say that his interest is identical with that of his client. When the accountability is perfect, the interest of rulers approximates more and more to identity with that of the people, in proportion as the people are more enlightened. The identity would be perfect, only if the people were so wise, that it should no longer be practicable to employ deceit as an instrument of government; a point of advancement only one stage below that at which they could do without government alto-

* *London Review*, July and October 1835.

gether; at least, without force, and penal sanctions, not (of course) without guidance and organized co-operation.

Identification of interest between the rulers and the ruled, being therefore, in a literal sense, impossible to be realized, ought not to be spoken of as a condition which a government must absolutely fulfil; but as an end to be incessantly aimed at, and approximated to as nearly as circumstances render possible, and as is compatible with the regard due to other ends. For this identity of interest, even if it were wholly attainable, not being the sole requisite of good government, expediency may require that we should sacrifice some portion of it, or (to speak more precisely) content ourselves with a somewhat less approximation to it than might possibly be attainable, for the sake of some other end.

The only end, liable occasionally to conflict with that which we have been insisting on, and at all comparable to it in importance—the only other condition essential to good government—is this: That it be government by a select body, not by the public collectively: That political questions be not decided by an appeal, either direct or indirect, to the judgment or will of an uninstructed mass, whether of gentlemen or of clowns; but by the deliberately formed opinions of a comparatively few, specially educated for the task. This is an element of good government which has existed, in a greater or less degree, in some aristocracies, though unhappily not in our own; and has been the cause of whatever reputation for prudent and skilful administration those governments have enjoyed. It has seldom been found in any aristocracies

but those which were avowedly such. Aristocracies in the guise of monarchies (such as those of England and France) have very generally been aristocracies of idlers; while the others (such as Rome, Venice, and Holland) might partially be considered as aristocracies of experienced and laborious men. Of all modern governments, however, the one by which this excellence is possessed in the most eminent degree is the government of Prussia—a most powerfully and strongly organized aristocracy of the most highly-educated men in the kingdom. The British government in India partakes (with considerable modifications) of the same character.

When this principle has been combined with other fortunate circumstances, and particularly (as in Prussia) with circumstances rendering the popularity of the government almost a necessary condition of its security, a very considerable degree of good government has occasionally been produced, without any express accountability to the people. Such fortunate circumstances, however, are seldom to be reckoned upon. But though the principle of government by persons specially brought up to it will not suffice to produce good government, good government cannot be had without it; and the grand difficulty in politics will for a long time be, how best to conciliate the two great elements on which good government depends; to combine the greatest amount of the advantage derived from the independent judgment of a specially instructed few, with the greatest degree of the security for rectitude of purpose derived from rendering those few responsible to the many.

What is necessary, however, to make the two ends

perfectly reconcilable, is a smaller matter than might at first sight be supposed. It is not necessary that the many should themselves be perfectly wise; it is sufficient if they be duly sensible of the value of superior wisdom. It is sufficient if they be aware, that the majority of political questions turn upon considerations of which they, and all persons not trained for the purpose, must necessarily be very imperfect judges; and that their judgment must in general be exercised rather upon the characters and talents of the persons whom they appoint to decide these questions for them, than upon the questions themselves. They would then select as their representatives those whom the general voice of the instructed pointed out as the *most* instructed; and would retain them, so long as no symptom was manifested in their conduct, of being under the influence of interests or of feelings at variance with the public welfare. This implies no greater wisdom in the people than the very ordinary wisdom of knowing what things they are and are not sufficient judges of. If the bulk of any nation possess a fair share of this wisdom, the argument for universal suffrage, so far as respects that people, is irresistible; for the experience of ages, and especially of all great national emergencies, bears out the assertion, that whenever the multitude are really alive to the necessity of superior intellect, they rarely fail to distinguish those who possess it.

The idea of a rational democracy is, not that the people themselves govern, but that they have security for good government. This security they cannot have by any other means than by retaining in their own

hands the ultimate control. If they renounce this, they give themselves up to tyranny. A governing class not accountable to the people are sure, in the main, to sacrifice the people to the pursuit of separate interests and inclinations of their own. Even their feelings of morality, even their ideas of excellence, have reference, not to the good of the people, but to their own good: their very virtues are class virtues—their noblest acts of patriotism and self-devotion are but the sacrifice of their private interests to the interests of their class. The heroic public virtue of a Leonidas was quite compatible with the existence of Helots. In no government will the interests of the people be the object, except where the people are able to dismiss their rulers as soon as the devotion of those rulers to the interests of the people becomes questionable. But this is the only fit use to be made of popular power. Provided good intentions can be secured, the best government (need it be said?) must be the government of the wisest, and these must always be a few. The people ought to be the masters, but they are masters who must employ servants more skilful than themselves: like a ministry when they employ a military commander, or the military commander when he employs an army surgeon. When the minister ceases to confide in the commander, he dismisses him and appoints another; but he does not send him instructions when and where to fight. He holds him responsible only for intentions and for results. The people must do the same. This does not render the control of the people nugatory. The control of a government over the commander of an army is not nugatory. A man's control over his physician is not

nugatory, though he does not direct his physician what medicine to administer.

But in government, as in everything else, the danger is, lest those who can do whatever they will, may will to do more than is for their ultimate interest. The interest of the people is, to choose for their rulers the most instructed and the ablest persons who can be found; and having done so, to allow them to exercise their knowledge and ability for the good of the people, under the check of the freest discussion and the most unreserved censure, but with the least possible direct interference of their constituents—as long as it *is* the good of the people, and not some private end, that they are aiming at. A democracy thus administered would unite all the good qualities ever possessed by any government. Not only would its ends be good, but its means would be as well chosen as the wisdom of the age would allow; and the omnipotence of the majority would be exercised through the agency and according to the judgment of an enlightened minority, accountable to the majority in the last resort.

But it is not possible that the constitution of the democracy itself should provide adequate security for its being understood and administered in this spirit. This rests with the good sense of the people themselves. If the people can remove their rulers for one thing, they can for another. That ultimate control, without which they cannot have security for good government, nay, if they please, be made the means of themselves interfering in the government, and making their legislators mere delegates for carrying into execution the preconceived judgment of the

majority. If the people do this, they mistake their interest; and such a government, though better than most aristocracies, is not the kind of democracy which wise men desire.

Some persons, and persons too whose desire for enlightened government cannot be questioned, do not take so serious a view of this perversion of the true idea of an enlightened democracy. They say, it is well that the many should evoke all political questions to their own tribunal, and decide them according to their own judgment, because then philosophers will be compelled to enlighten the multitude, and render them capable of appreciating their more profound views. No one can attach greater value than we do to this consequence of popular government, so far as we believe it capable of being realized; and the argument would be irresistible, if, in order to instruct the people, all that is requisite were to will it; if it were only the *discovery* of political truths which required study and wisdom, and the evidences of them when discovered could be made apparent at once to any person of common sense, as well educated as every individual in the community might and ought to be. But the fact is not so. Many of the truths of politics (in political economy, for instance) are the result of a concatenation of propositions, the very first steps of which no one who has not gone through a course of study is prepared to concede; there are others, to have a complete perception of which requires much meditation and experience of human nature. How will philosophers bring these home to the perceptions of the multitude? Can they enable common sense to judge of science, or inexpe-

rience of experience? Every one who has even crossed the threshold of political philosophy knows, that on many of its questions the false view is greatly the most plausible; and a large portion of its truths are, and must always remain, to all but those who have specially studied them, paradoxes; as contrary, in appearance, to common sense, as the proposition that the earth moves round the sun. The multitude will never believe those truths, until tendered to them from an authority in which they have as unlimited confidence as they have in the unanimous voice of astronomers on a question of astronomy. That they should have no such confidence at present is no discredit to them; for where are the persons who are entitled to it? But we are well satisfied that it will be given, as soon as knowledge shall have made sufficient progress among the instructed classes themselves, to produce something like a general agreement in their opinions on the leading points of moral and political doctrine. Even now, on those points on which the instructed classes are agreed, the uninstructed have generally adopted their opinions.

END OF VOL. I.

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